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CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY AND THEISM

In clever hands that are not checked by a sufficient consciousness of the whole, the Hegelian dialectic may be made into the means of producing a seeming proof of anything. — Edward Caird

While denying the presence and activity of the principle of reality in man's thinking, Lotze still attributes value and validity to its results. — Henry Jones

No positive hypothesis can be offered as a substitute for a personal God which is not either an abstraction from personality, and therefore demonstrably unreal, or an abstraction inconsistently personified, and therefore demonstrably untrue. — J. R. Illingworth

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY AND THEISM

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE.

Nearly three years ago the members of the Glasgow University Theological Society were kind enough to invite me to occupy the Honorary Presidency of their association. In this capacity it became my duty to deliver an Address on certain aspects of contemporary theological inquiry. Since that time I have been repeatedly requested to publish the lecture in accessible shape, and I have been told that portions of it, which appeared in *The Thinker*, were sought after by students in the United States and in Germany as well as in Scotland. To meet this request more adequately, the materials have been greatly extended; those who heard the Glasgow lecture will find that less than one-fourth of the present volume consists of the considerations I was permitted to place before them. The personal tone incident to the

lecture form has for the most part been eliminated, although traces of it may still be found in one or two places.

I venture to express the hope that the book, small as it is, may to some extent subserve the function to which the original Address was subordinated, — that of leading students to frame opinions of their own on these questions.

R. M. WENLEY.

Ann Arbor, Michigan,
November, 1896.

CONTENTS.

		PAGE
INTRODUCTORY:		
	The Theological Situation	1
SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY:		
I.	The General Principles of the Speculative School	11
II.	The Special Conclusions of the Speculative School	27
III.	Criticism of the General Principles of the Speculative School	39
IV.	The Treatment of Christianity by the Speculative School	60
RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY:		
I.	The Presuppositions of the Ritschlian School	82
II.	The Special Conclusions of the Ritschlian School	95
III.	Criticism of the Ritschlian Presuppositions	112
THE THEISTIC PROBLEM:		
I.	Philosophy and Theological Problems, especially Theism	125
II.	Agnosticism and the Theistic Problem . .	135
III.	The Principle of Rationality	146

THE THEISTIC PROBLEM (*continued*): PAGE

IV. Speculative Gnosticism and the Theistic Problem 162

V. Personality and the Theistic Problem . . 173

CONCLUSION:

The Final Idealism 187

INDEX 199

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY AND THEISM

INTRODUCTORY

The Theological Situation

Little more than a decade ago an impression happened to be prevalent among theological students, my college contemporaries, that their subject was a dry, uninteresting study. Indeed, I fear that not a few were wont to indulge themselves in the very doubtful luxury of contempt as they approached it. Time tries all, however, and it is possible, after an interval of reflection, not only to justify a complete reversal of this attitude, but also to show incidentally that such an opinion, especially at the present time, must either be devoid of foundation or based upon misconception. To-day each of the several departments of theology demands a scientific training, and so the preparation for any one contributes to the best kind of education; while theology proper is, perhaps, only equalled by speculative biology in the interest which surrounds its most pressing problems.

Thought has been ceaselessly moving, and we have arrived at the stage when a new departure seems highly probable — a departure that cannot but be fraught with deep import to the moral and spiritual life of the generation in which we live. Moreover, the much-discussed lectures delivered upon the Gifford Foundation in the Scottish universities, the Hibbert lectures at London and Oxford, and the lectures provided by the Ely and other Foundations in the United States have caused many among us to bestow renewed attention upon the questions connected with the interpretation of religions, particularly of Christianity.

At the outset, in order to keep discussion within comparatively narrow limits, the general development of theology during the last seventy years, say, must be presupposed. The drawn battle of the eighteenth century, between the upholders of rationalism and supernaturalism, was brought to an end by the summary methods of Kant and Schleiermacher, who respectively conducted the contestant groups off the field. Thereafter, for a considerable period, notwithstanding the growth of theological schools

with tenets inspired by these formative thinkers, importance centred in philosophy. The systems of the elder Fichte, of Schelling, and of Hegel dominated nearly all noticeable work. In spite of the romantic tendencies of some theologians, and the refined Spinozism of others, like C. H. Weisse, it can hardly be said that either Fichte or Schelling succeeded in creating a theological following of his own. Very different was Hegel's case. Numerous and influential writers gathered round him, and applied his distinctive methods to religious questions. Men such as Marheineke, Göschel, and Daub in his third stage, devoted themselves to a restatement of dogmas directed towards bringing them into accord with the forms of the Dialectic. Their contribution is to-day of little more than historical interest — a fact that need occasion no wonder when their frequent lack of balance is remembered. Daub, for example, hardly inspires confidence when, in his anxiety to illustrate progress by antagonism, he confers the divinity of Satanhood upon Iscariot, so that the betrayer may oppose the Master on something like equal terms. The truth is that Hegel's epoch-

making incentive to theological progress consists far rather in the central conception of his thought — the rationality of history — than in the peculiar framework with which he surrounded it. Accordingly, the new era may be dated, not from Marheineke and the rest, but from Strauss, Vatke, and F. C. Baur.

Their achievement, which would never have been accomplished without Hegel, constitutes, as we shall see, a permanent factor in contemporary controversy. When the clouds of critical dust raised by the scrimmage (I think this term best conveys the remarkable absence of dignity) over the *Leben Jesu* of Strauss had to some extent subsided, theologians were better able to discriminate gains and losses. And, as a result, an eclectic tendency appeared. Of this, Richard Rothe may be said to have been the most distinguished originator, and his *Theologische Ethik* marks a middle point between the earlier groupings of German theology and those now prevalent. Rothe drew elements from the Hegelian Right, from Schelling's follower Oetinger, and from Schleiermacher. His work, along with that

of F. C. Baur — taking names for movements — furnishes a starting-point for more modern theories. Theology proper, in the classical speculative line, then came to have a new Left and a new Right. Biedermann, Kein., Weizsäcker, and Otto Pfleiderer are chief representatives of the one; Dorner and Beyschlag, with whom we may, perhaps, name Bernhard Weiss, are associated with the other. Both parties maintain what is practically a composite scheme — the former being swayed most by the results of speculative interpretation and historical criticism, the latter by the desire for systematic statement of religious doctrine, as it affects man personally. The one, in short, emphasizes the objective, the other the subjective aspect of theology. The theories represented by these, among numerous other writers, are, as a natural result, prone to mutual inconsistency. They at least agree in containing philosophical factors derived from a common source — no small matter, indeed, seeing that theology, like religion, has, until very recent times, invariably been concerned with the meaning of the universe. Accordingly, their supporters combine to show a solid front against that

now influential theological school which has sprung up within the last twenty-five years under the leadership of Albrecht Ritschl. This, which may be termed the theology of the end of the century, has adopted different premises. It derives largely from the sceptical factor in Kant, and from the empiricism of the scientific movement, to some extent from the epistemology of Lotze, and to a lesser degree from the subjective theology of Schleiermacher. Broadly, then, these two parties confront one another. They have their serious internal differences — as between Pfleiderer and Weiss, or between Herrmann and Bender — but these are comparatively trivial as compared with the gulf fixed between the two schools as a whole. Accordingly, it must be our effort to understand the doctrines and aims of each, if we are to apprehend the problems with which at this moment theology is face to face.

Before proceeding to this task, it may be well to premise further that the progress of German theology just noted is not without parallel in Britain and America. During the early part of the period, no doubt, inefficient

means of intercommunication rendered reciprocal influences somewhat feeble. Nevertheless, like German, English theology had its rationalism and supernaturalism, its pietism or subjectivity, its semi-sceptical, semi-empirical exponents. At present, too, the new Left and the new Right are not without representatives among us, and the parallelism is likely to become more and more striking. Biedermann and Pfleiderer embody theological tendencies not widely different from those of Drs. Everett and Royce of Harvard, Sterrett of Washington, Stewart and Menzies of St. Andrews, and the late Willam Mackintosh and T. H. Green; while Principal Fairbairn occupies a middle position on the Right, which is shared largely by Professors Orr and G. P. Fisher, and partly by Professors Bruce and Briggs. Parallel also to the Right, though with very considerable variations, due to the influence of Renouvier, stands Dr. Flint. Curiously enough, too, though without any collusion, Matthew Arnold and Mr. Gladstone furnish elements of agreement with the Ritschlian standpoint, which, in the realm of Christology, was to some extent anticipated by

Macleod Campbell, and which has not been without influence over that independent and rising theologian, Professor Robert Mackintosh, of Manchester. It would not be surprising were some younger Scottish or American theologian to furnish us, at no distant date, with an authoritative pronouncement on Ritschlianism from the vantage-ground of discipleship; in the meantime, however, it would be premature, and probably unfair, to mention names. The German and British-American positions differ in many details, especially as concerns such development towards Ritschlianism as we can at present show. But interchange of opinion is incomparably freer than it once was, and substantially the same forces are at work, if allowance be made for the predominance of philosophical considerations on the continent, and of ecclesiastical ties in the English-speaking countries.

The most recent, and in many respects the most remarkable, of Scottish contributors to this discussion says, in a passing reference to method: "It may be observed in general that, when a controversy is carried on for centuries on any subject of pressing and practical

human interest, without reaching, or even tending to reach, a consistent and satisfactory result — a result so commending itself to reason as to command universal assent — the reflection is obvious that the question or subject requires to be looked at from a point of view above that to which the disputants have been able to rise."[1] Ability thus to overcome half-truths is denied to all but a select few. Perhaps, in the present instance, a sincere desire to arrive at an accurate estimate of the positions maintained by others, biassed only by a sincerer desire to arrive at the truth, may subserve a similar, if less ambitious, aim. The extreme difficulty of absolutely setting down in every point the doctrine of a theological school must not be forgotten. At the same time, entire groups of theologians employ substantially identical first principles, and formulate deductions that tend practically in one direction. In short, the broad outlines on which we must concentrate attention *limn themselves* with sufficient clearness. The chief restriction one is compelled to make relates to

[1] Wm. Mackintosh, *The Natural History of the Christian Religion*, p. 13.

the mediating theologians so called. For the present purpose their tendencies are too indefinite, not perhaps regarded as a whole, but undoubtedly on certain pivoting points.

SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY

I. *The General Principles of the Speculative School*

The speculative school, to which we now turn, was a direct product of the Hegelian philosophy. And, no matter what further elements it may have assimilated since, this system still remains the basis on which the theology is founded. Baur's mildly sarcastic criticism [1] serves, however, to remind us that, on the philosophical presuppositions, a series of new developments leading beyond the comparatively orthodox conclusions of Hegel's *Religionsphilosophie* was inevitable. Nevertheless, the Berlin Lectures are the real point of departure, and continue to furnish the immanent first principles. Even experts, whose main interest is directed to detailed facts of religious life rather than to general principles of development, recognize that Hegel was the first to organize systematic

[1] Cf. *Kirchengeschichte,* vol. v. p. 378.

study of religion. "The fundamental principles of Kant's and Schleiermacher's systems supplied some foundation stones on which to erect a philosophy of religion. But we must recognize Hegel as its true founder, because he first carried out the vast idea of realizing, as a whole, the various modes for studying religion (metaphysical, psychological, and historical), and made us see the harmony between the idea and the realization of religion. No one approaches him in this respect."[1] Naturally, metaphysical insight and bias, born of conviction, swayed him more than mere learning. At the same time, it is to be remembered that he had mastered much of the somewhat meagre array of facts then accessible. The consequence was that the problems were regarded and presented mainly from a speculative standpoint. Hegel tries, with sublime thoroughness and disregard of consequences, to read the "self-evolution of the Idea" into all the varied forms of religion, and to trace in them the ubiquitous categories of the *Logic*.

The sphere of the religious consciousness is mapped out to begin with. God, strug-

[1] *The Science of Religion.* P. D. C. de la Saussaye, p. 4.

gling in the throes of self-realization, is the motive force of the evolution of religions; God, as a completed world-process, is the object of religion. Or, to take Hegel's own words, "The whole manifold of human relations, activities, joys, everything that man values and esteems, wherein he seeks his happiness, his glory, and his pride, all find their middle point in religion — in the thought, consciousness, and feeling of God. God is, therefore, the Beginning and the End of everything." This is the pictorial way in which religion frees man for a little from the harshness of the life-struggle that presses so sorely upon him. Philosophy, theology, and religion are accordingly identical in their subject. The first considers as such the permeating reason which is the efficient cause of the cosmos. The second is the science of God in his relation to man, and especially to the God-Man. The last leads to worship of God as the one Being in relation to whom man may achieve his highest vocation. Religion, that is, constitutes a particular instance, presented under certain limited forms, of the world-wide principle which is continually revealing itself

under other guises in every sphere wherein activity capable of rational estimate takes place. As a result, speculative notions, in the strict sense of the term, reproduce themselves in the history of religions and in the essential constitution of the highest religion. To illustrate this reproduction and to prove at once its truth and its inevitableness is the task which Hegel set himself. After a discussion, in the first part, of the Absolute Idea as it presents itself in religious shape, he proceeds, in the second, to characterize the various historical religions, and to indicate their places in his scheme. In the third and final part, Christianity is shown to be the highest possible embodiment of religion — the religion beyond which, in the nature of the Idea itself, and according to its manifestation by means of Jesus, one cannot pass. For theology, the most interesting portions of this analysis are unquestionably the speculative digests of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. "Dogma is necessary, and must be taught as valid truth." The rationalizing of the Trinity is, probably, the most conspicuous example of the method adopted. Deity, in his loneliness before the world

was, embosomed an infinite yearning, and God became a Creator in order to realize objectively that boundless love which is His pre-eminent quality. But the creature, born into the thraldom of time and space, remained separated from his Maker for ages. The conception of God's Fatherhood never revealed itself, and an awful antagonism subsisted between created and Creator. So, too, not recognizing their common Father, the children opposed one another, and were broken up into isolated groups. During this struggle men tasted of the forbidden tree, and became increasingly like gods, knowing good from evil. When the perception of evil, with its accompanying sense of sin, had been deepened to the uttermost, the perfect Man appeared, to stem the mightiest crisis of moral history. Then the great reconciliation was effected. In the Person of Christ God found himself in man, and man found himself in God. The Creator whose creatures had thwarted him so that he seemed to have lost somewhat of his life, received back in the good time of his energizing Spirit all that he had given, and in fuller measure. By the inevitable law of

moral progress, God had in some sense died to live. The work of the immanent Spirit wrought its own self-development. The depth of the riches of the divine nature was gradually revealed, and with the Incarnation of Christ became fully known.

This original, commanding, and seductive conception did not maintain itself intact, except in the speculations of Hegel's immediate followers, and, so far as I am aware, no contemporary theologian upholds it in precisely the old form. But its influence is still widespread, and it presents undoubted attractions to many perplexed minds. Two principal factors are contained in it. First, a theory of the ultimate nature of the universe; second, a plan, or methodology, of the manner in which this nature reveals itself in the successive stages of its self-evolution. Broadly speaking, and remembering how hard it is to dogmatize on such matters, it may be said that the former embodies a truth of the last importance, whereas the latter is very largely, if not entirely, erroneous. In any case, no theologian now affects the cast-iron dialectic method, and the one living thinker who seems to countenance it employs

a wholly new form, one more general and elastic.[1]

Absence of the reconstruction of dogma constitutes the principal difference between Hegel's work and that of his later disciples. The historical method has accomplished many things in the interval, and the neo-Hegelians, especially in their treatment of the Jewish and Christian religions, have not been slow to take advantage of the newer results. They make no explicit attempt to construct a precise parallel between philosophy and religion, they do not "interpret" cardinal tenets of the faith — there is nothing, for instance, to place alongside Hegel's presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity. The aim, on the contrary, is to trace a general law or principle, peculiar to human self-consciousness, throughout the entire course of religious history, and to find in this very history a development wherein the religious life of the race takes the shape which that of the individual, attaching due regard to his rational nature, *might be expected to assume*. Man's consciousness, as the argument sometimes runs, is so constructed that three elements must enter into

[1] E. Caird, in *The Evolution of Religion*.

it. Self is obviously there; so too is not-self, or the world of reality. But, taken apart, each of these is an abstraction, and lacks true existence. Thus there must be a union of both, for the one cannot be known in isolation from the other. This third combining element in man's being, simply on account of its unifying power, may be called God. The human mind involves, by its mere existence, self, the world, and deity. The position to be occupied by the philosophical investigator of religion is, accordingly, indicated with sufficient distinctness. There cannot but be a reproduction of the indispensable elements of self-consciousness in the varied religions. Moreover, representative types of religion necessarily derive their value and permanent interest from the manner in which they embody one or other of these elements. In other words, apart from any consideration of the facts that supply the particulars of religious history, investigation of man's nature as a thinking being supplies the presumptions which it is the business of philosophy of religion, and of the theology based on it, to verify. The unity of self, not-self, and God, as the sole ideas constitutive of self-

consciousness, is assumed as an inevitable preliminary to study of religion, wherein the parts organic to the given unity are to be seen in such separation as is possible. Further, in the development of self-consciousness itself there is a cyclic predominance of each of the constituent conceptions, and this, too, theology ought to follow in tracing the growth and explaining the import of pious aspiration. The speculative group, in short, have a sketch-plan ready to hand, derived from metaphysical considerations of the most abstract kind, and this they proceed to fill in, as concerns religion, after an equally metaphysical method.

In this departure from the letter of Hegel it may be agreed that theologians have evinced a wise instinct. There remains to them an untrammelled theory of the universe. This is still substantially accepted; indeed, from acceptance of it the title "speculative" comes. What, then, does it amount to? It is preferable to hear a statement from an accredited member of the school: "Even in the hypothetically assumed case, that there is only an ideal nature in the consciousness of thinking minds, we could not escape from

the question how the different subjects come to a corresponding image of the world, and how they are able to distinguish what is merely subjectively represented from the common or objective mode of representation — that is to say, how they can distinguish truth from error. This question, however, can hardly be solved otherwise than by the assumption of a universal consciousness, which must be the common ground, as well as the ruling law, of all individual consciousnesses or minds. . . . If it holds true of the individual being, that the final end which results from the development of its life is also already the ideal prius of the whole process, then we shall be able to apply the same thought to the whole process of the life of our earth, and to draw therefrom a conclusion as to the principle of the process. And we are justified in doing so by the very fundamental thought of modern biology, according to which all the life of the earth forms *one* advancing development from the lowest to the highest forms of existence."[1] Moreover, God is revealing Himself, not only in the natural, but also in the moral and

[1] Pfleiderer, *Gifford Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 142, 156, 157.

religious, order. "The historical order of the religious revelation, that it is a development from lower to ever higher stages, a development in which the new is always at once the fulfilment and criticism of the old, becomes nowhere more clearly apparent than in the relation of Christianity to Judaism. . . . I think assuredly that with the entrance of Christianity into the world, the firm foundation for its realization has been laid, so that the whole history of the world prior to Christianity may be regarded as the preparation for the realization of that ideal, and the whole of Christian history as the development of it. If, therefore, the whole history of the world shows itself as the teleological process of the advancing realization of the divine purpose of the world, we are entitled to find in the history of the world the revelation of the world-governing wisdom of God."[1] These statements may be taken as sufficient, because they are very recent, and because Dr. Pfleiderer is one of the least *doctrinaire* members of the school which he ornaments.

Setting aside the speculative treatment of such a theory in and for itself, its obvious

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 189, 202.

interest is historical. And, accordingly, we find that minute study of the historical data has, since the disruption of the Hegelian school proper, attracted increasing attention among theologians. The leading workers in this department are often possessed, not only of philosophical discrimination and acuteness, but also of minute Biblical knowledge, which enables them to illustrate and support their speculative conclusions. When these two endowments are not concentrated in one person, a compensation is found in the superior attainments of single thinkers in one sphere or the other, and their united results serve as the basis for a review of the entire field. Our question, therefore, comes to be — What conclusions have been derived from the piecing out of the general doctrine of the immanence of deity? How do the historic documents supplement and expand the speculative presuppositions?

The tendency to lay hold upon the documents, to regard them as *mémoires pour servir* to this special aspect of the general theory of the universe, and, at the same time, to exclude the peculiar dialectical frame-work, cannot be better illustrated than by the fate

that has latterly overtaken the investigations of F. C. Baur. Not infrequently one hears the statement that the great Tübingen critic has formulated results only to have them overturned; that his influence has disappeared; that even his own followers have abandoned his positions at discretion. For the most part, this allegation is due to a misunderstanding. According to Baur's theory, Christian origins embodied an implicit antagonism, which, in the course of the early history of our religion, became explicit, and thereafter disappeared in a higher unity. Christ himself incarnated the terms of this covert opposition. His religion was spiritually universal, but he identified himself with a particularist principle when he accepted the Jewish Messiahship. Hence the partial truths defended by the contending parties of the first Church. Peter and the Judaizers were not wholly wrong, nor were Stephen, Paul, and the universalists wholly right. This neo-scholastic dogma of progress by conflict, as thus originated, Baur employed to explain the beginnings and inner relations of the New Testament documents. When the schism was at its deepest, Paul's four

genuine Epistles and the Book of Revelation were composed. The early period of conciliation, when the parties to the quarrel were tentatively seeking a truce, brought forth the synoptic Gospels, the Acts, the Deutero-Pauline Epistles, and the Epistles of Peter and James. Finally, when the reconciliation with its resultant access of power developed during antagonism had been effected, the Gospel and the Epistles attributed to John, and the Pastoral Epistles were written. Now, it *is* true that Baur's dialectic method has been wholly dismissed, and that the conclusions traceable to the trimming of data in its interest have, for the most part, been departed from. For example, we no longer hold that Christianity *must* have advanced by thesis, antithesis, and synthesis; perhaps some of us are quite sceptical about the supposed influence of Jewish Christianity; therefore we do not agree that Matthew is the earliest, because the distinctively Jewish-Christian, synoptic; that Luke is the second, because the heathen-Christian; and that Mark is the third, because the product of an eclectic and non-partisan redaction of the two others. Neither can we accept the account of the

Apocalypse. Our attitude, too, towards the Pauline Epistles and the Acts, to say nothing of other documents, is no longer that of Baur. Yet, in spite of all this, his problem remains till the present moment the problem which New Testament criticism, especially in the speculative school, is striving to solve. For instance, his questions respecting the authorship of the Fourth Gospel and the relation of Philo to its writer are to-day *sub judice*. Even the Ritschlians, as represented by Wendt,[1] preserve his conclusions when they assign this Gospel, "in its present form, to a writer of the second century belonging to the religious circle founded by the Apostle John." What remains, then, to the "historical school within theology" is the general theory of a rational development in early Christianity, and of a consequent explicable interconnection between the integral portions of the New Testament. Or, as Holtzmann has put it, "Baur was a positive spirit, since he was by no means satisfied with denying to a Biblical writing the authorship ascribed to it by tradition or named in the superscription, but claimed emphatically to practise 'positive

[1] Cf. *Die Lehre Jesu* (Erster Theil, untranslated), *passim*.

criticism' — to show the place which the various writings of the New Testament held in the general development of Christianity, and in which they are historically comprehensible."

Notwithstanding the defection from Baur's strict tenets, the speculative theology and the theory of the documents continue to be complementary. As the former teaches, in its general principles, the entire history of the universe is witness to the presence of an immanent self-developing spirit, one that commits no leaps in the course of its majestic evolution. Christianity is not an exceptional phenomenon, and so the writings that record its inception and early progress must form portions of a growing organism. On the other hand, detailed examination of the books furnishes forth proof and illustration of the cosmic development at once during one of its most momentous stages, and in its highest aspect — the spiritual. A spiritual consideration of the recorded phenomena supplants a supernatural. Miracles, as isolated and inexplicable disturbances of the world-order, do not happen; the single miracle lies in the constitution of the universe itself. What, next, are the resultant theological inferences?

II. *The Special Conclusions of the Speculative School*

A somewhat bald statement of results may suffice; and, perhaps, this is not without advantage in the direction of definiteness. For it has only too often been the custom to express these conclusions in language which, hallowed by long association, does not fully convey all that is implied.

1. *The doctrine of God.* Setting aside, meantime, the difficult question of personality, which, indeed, Professor Pfleiderer alone seems anxious to emphasize, it may be said that God is at once the Prius, the Immanent Principle, and the Final Cause of the universe. Being a subject or eternal consciousness, he finds his most eminent "manifestation" in our spirits. We are all his sons, not simply because he is the synthetic power implied in that "single and unalterable order of relations" that we call nature, but specially because "our consciousness may mean either of two things: either a function of the animal organism, which is being made, gradually and with interruptions, a vehicle of the

eternal consciousness; or that eternal consciousness itself, as making the animal organism its vehicle and subject to certain limitations in so doing, but retaining its essential characteristic as independent of time, as the determinant of becoming, which has not and does not itself become."[1] If this be true, then nature is a manifestation of God in one degree, while humanity is his revelation in another and higher mode. We are all brethren because "only in such a universal fellowship, in which the individuals are bound together through the same devotion of all to the common end of humanity — to the Ideal of the good and true — can we behold the ultimate final end of history."[2] Consequently, God is to be regarded primarily as the principle of unity in the material world, in individual selves, in the relation between these two, and in the communion of selves or spirits with each other. So the whole round universe is an organism of which we are parts, and of which he is the life-preserving principle. Accordingly, "a supernaturalism which tries to survive alongside

[1] Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 72.
[2] Pfleiderer, *Gifford Lectures*, vol. i. p. 202.

of naturalism, dividing the kingdom with it, will soon have taken away from it 'even that which it seemeth to have.' The only hope of a successful issue is to carry the war into the enemy's quarters, and to maintain what Carlyle called a *Natural Supernaturalism;* i. e., the doctrine, not that there are single miracles, but that the *universe is miraculous*, and that, in order to conceive it truly, we must think of it, not as a mechanical system occasionally broken in upon from above, but as an organism which implies a spiritual principle as its beginning and as its end."[1]

The chief end of a science of religion, and of theology as one of its departments, is, therefore, to bring back difference to unity, and a speculative evolution may be said to furnish at once the method and direction. "The idea of an absolute unity, which transcends all the oppositions of finitude, and especially the last opposition, which includes all others — the opposition of subject and object — *is the ultimate presupposition of our consciousness.* Hence we cannot understand the real character of our rational life or appreciate the full compass of its movement,

[1] E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. i. pp. 319, 320.

unless we recognize as its necessary constituents or guiding ideas, not only the ideas of object and subject, but also the idea of God."[1] Consequently, "religions may differ very widely, they may be comparatively elevated or they may be what we would call degraded; but they have this as their common characteristic (at least when they rise above the vaguest superstition), that they give a kind of unity to life."[2] To discover what this unity is, and to show how it manifests itself in the numerous religions of the world is the task. The entire field of *facts* is thus mapped out according to a speculative method which, in a sense, is beforehand with them in that, so far as concerns the present discussion, it is established ere they have received any consideration. Types of religion must be found corresponding to the stages just specified, and the embodiment in them respectively of specialized aspects of self-consciousness must be distinctly proved. Seeing that man turns first to the not-self in the life of thought, objective religion leads the way in the evolutionary process. Fetichism, animism, and ancestor-worship are at the lower

[1] *Evol. of Rel.*, vol. i. pp. 67, 68. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

end of the scale. Then follows polytheism, striving, in the Vedic religion, to reach monotheism, and eventually, by an inevitable process, sinking back into the abstract unity of pantheism. This is succeeded by the most representative objective religion, that of Greece, in the treatment of which some writers are at their best, perhaps because they are least metaphysical. The anthropomorphism which, particularly in Hellenism, accompanies the highest forms of objective religion, naturally originates a transition to subjective considerations. Self looms larger and larger till at length man is left alone with his own soul, having surrendered the "outward world to some power which is not regarded as divine." With wonderful insight and resource, a plan is thus constructed, and this is immediately removed from the speculative to the historical sphere for the systematizing of recorded phenomena. Buddhism, Stoicism, and the religion of Israel are taken as types, each in its own rank showing a particular aspect of the predominance of the idea of self. Then usually follow pregnant discourses on the relation of Judaism to Christianity, wherein the passage from sub-

jective religion to the absolute religion is set forth. The unity between subjective and objective religion was implicitly present even in the lowest religions; it was consciously perceived and explicitly expressed only by Jesus. The remainder of the investigation commonly concerns itself with the internal development of the absolute religion. Christianity, embosoming as it does elements drawn from objective pantheism and subjective monotheism, progresses by the continuous antagonism between these constituent principles. Now one, now the other has the ascendency, and according to the momentary domination so is the contemporary interpretation of Christ's message. The medieval Church, to take an example, was too objective in one of its aspects, the Reformation too subjective; and the varied phases of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, so-called, in modern theology are to be attributed to the same causes. The labor of the ages has bequeathed lessons to the nineteenth century which seem to point to a fresh and more comprehensive reconstruction of the doctrine of the Christ.

The term *Nothwendigkeit*, as employed by

the classical German idealists, may fairly be said to describe the leading characteristics of this method. Although the word, literally translated, means necessity, it does not imply, in the physical sense, compulsion from without. The reference is rather to an inner principle, such a law as that under which acorns develop oaks, eggs hatch after their sorts, and the child becomes the father of the man. Self-consciousness, as we are told, is an organism, and in its essential unity evolves by a necessity which is also self-realization; it thus comes to achieve only what was always immanent in it. All happenings in the sphere of the religious consciousness, thus, could not have been otherwise, and their explanation implies constant reference to God, the unity ever present in the difference between subject and object. "In the consciousness of the simplest and most uncultured individual there are contained all the principles that can be evolved by the wisest philosopher of the most cultivated time; and even the rudest religious systems have represented in them — though, no doubt, in a shadowy and distorted way — all the elements that enter into

the highest Christian worship."[1] Christianity is, therefore, to be viewed as an integral, and in no wise exceptional, portion of the absolute miracle. It is a stage in the manifestation of the immanent spiritual principle. Different in degree, no doubt, from Buddhism or the Greek religion, or even from Judaism, it cannot but be regarded as the same in kind. When we contemplate it as the mightiest instance of spiritual development, we do well. But, emphatically, we must not permit our special interest in it to mislead us into supposing that it stands in a class by itself or constitutes an inexplicable phenomenon. The *principle* of God's relation to man was set forth afresh in Jesus, who accomplished his mission under conditions which do not differ, except in their special temporary combination, from those operative in the case, say, of Gautama or Socrates, Dante or Shakespeare, Luther or Hegel, or of any other vehicle of epoch-making ideals.

2. *The value of the New Testament documents.* All these writings are *post factum*, some having been produced at greater, others at lesser, intervals after the martyrdom of

[1] *Evol. of Rel.*, vol. i. pp. 201, 202.

the Master. They may be conveniently divided into four groups. (1) The synoptic Gospels, which state the religion of Jesus with the highest purity and least complexity, and among which, notwithstanding its laconic severity, Mark alone affords a basis for a trustworthy account of the world's greatest religious genius. One must note, too, that these three Gospels are characterized by an absence of evidence for doctrines that afterwards became dogmatically embodied in the belief in the divinity of Christ. (2) The genuine Epistles of Paul, which summarize the religion of the Christ — a system to be carefully distinguished from the religion of Jesus. Paul founds his dogmatic teaching upon the death of Jesus, which he views as an atonement, thus reinstating that very Jewish idea which Jesus had striven to break in pieces. The "doctrines of the incarnation and of the divinity of Jesus are inevitable inferences from that of atonement, provided this is regarded as of objective significance and as an offering presented to God, which was certainly its significance for the mind of St. Paul."[1] (3) The Deutero-Pauline

[1] Mackintosh, *The Natural History of the Christian Religion*, p. 397.

Epistles, which partake of the character of Christian Gnosticism. Here, owing to a dualistic theory of the world-order, Christ has come to be regarded as the one Mediator between God and man. With these Epistles emerge the modified doctrines of justification by faith, of grace, and of Christian liberty. Christianity is now regarded as a mystic saving process, of which Christ is the instrument and man the subject. This view of the matter is so much at odds with that of the synoptic Gospels as almost to cancel their most essential teaching. (4) The Fourth Gospel, in which a more highly evolved and broadened Christian Gnosticism is formulated. Here Christ is no longer a mere mediator — a being standing between God and man — but has come to be identified with God himself. Hence the book has been aptly entitled, "The Gospel of a Divine Humanity." Christ has become the Word — not, indeed, a transcendent emanation from Deity, but a human incarnation, who thus presents a practicable moral ideal to mankind. Baur's general theory accordingly remains, although its method has been forsaken, and his conclusions, cut, as it were, to

the order of this method, abandoned. The documents are still taken as integrally related elements in the record of a developing history, and so can be treated entirely as the books of any other religion. They are literature, and, as such, they do not furnish authority for dogmas, but rather serve as aids towards an explanation of the manner in which these very dogmas came to be originated.

3. *The doctrine of Christ and of the so-called cardinal tenets of the Christian faith.* On these matters it is most satisfactory to record the words of the authorities themselves. "It is no longer possible to regard Jesus as an incarnation of the divine being, who wrought miracles, and by his death made atonement for the sins of men, and rose again from the dead, and afterwards ascended into heaven in the presence of his disciples; but as one who, by nature and from first to last, was a member, pure and simple, of the human family — a link of the human chain just as any of ourselves are; having all the properties of human nature, but those of no other; as one whose nature, faculty, and character were to the same extent with those of other men the product of his ancestry and of his surround-

ings; and whose life and work went to determine and to influence the life and history of succeeding generations."[1] As a result, the miraculous birth of Jesus, his mystically consecrating baptism, his transfiguration, his institution of the Supper as a saving sacrament, as well as the accounts of the Resurrection and of the Christophanies, and the dogma of the atonement in its ordinary sense, are to be regarded, "not as facts at all, but only as quasi-historical or mythical forms, in which Christian phantasy clothed the facts of Christian experience."[2] In the same way, Paul's conversion, Pentecost, and other special manifestations receive explanation. All are but symbols, in which the essence of Christianity happens to have become enclosed during the course of history, and, if taken literally, they only serve to obscure the "new world of the holy spirit it was the purpose of Christianity to found."

[1] Mackintosh, *The Natural History of the Christian Religion*, p. 56.

[2] Mackintosh, *ibid.*, p. 83; cf. A. Robinson, *The Saviour in the Newer Light, passim.*

III. *Criticism of the General Principles of the Speculative School*

THERE is, perhaps, little reason for wonder that many good people, on hearing these conclusions stated thus without any trappings of religious language, should have exclaimed, with Mary, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." But this is no refuge for the instructed theologian. The inferences have been reached by speculative insight, by critical and historical research, and to these methods and processes they continue to remain amenable, by them they must in the issue stand or fall. For theology is not a matter of faith, but of intellectual grasp and careful scholarship. On these lines we must, accordingly, proceed with what equity we can command.

None but the most blindly prejudiced would take it upon themselves to deny the lasting benefits conferred upon theology by the speculative group. Indeed, one hardly oversteps the mark in declaring that Hegel, Strauss, and Baur, along with the many less eminent men who worked in their spirit,

renewed the science. Once for all, they put an end to the peddling rationalism of Paulus and his coadjutors. They gave the *coup de grâce* to the deadening deism of the eighteenth century. Their protest against the naturalism of the fifties and sixties did not stop short at mere criticism, but included a complete and far more adequate theory. Most of all, perhaps, they brought back somewhat of the essence of Christian teaching to theology when they attacked individualism, and set forth in permanent form the doctrine that no man can divest himself of responsibility for being his brother's keeper. In carrying out the constructive achievements for which they are so conspicuous, they, no doubt, "clapped wings" to a lot of the solid old "lumber of the universe," and erred in disregarding much that was of real value. But, even thus, they performed a service that can by no means be minimized. Their hypothesis was not a vague, mystical suggestion, but a rounded whole worked over and over in many of its parts with rigorous care and magnificent determination. The theory gave rise to an extraordinary ferment of inquiry into the origin and early development of

Christianity, and so effected results which, if not without parallel, have gone far to change the face of theology. In one aspect, these studies have largely narrowed the vital problem, with great advantage to perspicuity and directness; while in another, new difficulties have been laid bare, the very existence of which had not previously dawned upon thinkers. We who live to some extent in the midst of this movement, or who owe to it far more than we are fully aware, can hardly be expected to estimate aright the stimulus it has imparted. We can, at all events, acknowledge that the material on which it has turned our thoughts is not likely to be sterile. What a recent Gifford lecturer has said of philosophy is plainly capable of still deeper application in the theological sphere. "The greatness of a philosophy is its power of comprehending facts. The most characteristic fact of modern times is Christianity. The general thought and action of the civilized world has been alternately fascinated and repelled, but always influenced, and to a high degree permeated, by the Christian theory of life, and still more by the faithful vision of that life displayed in the Son of

Man. To pass that great cloud of witness and leave it on the other side, is to admit that your system is no key to the secret of the world, even if we add, as some will prefer, of the world as it is and has been."[1] Thanks to such a spirit as this, we now perceive that the important problems centre round God, round the nature of God's manifestation of himself in Jesus, and round the relation in which we, sons of men, stand to the Son of God, our spiritual ensample and elder brother.

The Christian conception of Deity, we are told, is a complex one, containing two main elements — "the moral-religious ideal of the anthropomorphically represented holy Lord and merciful Father; . . . and the metaphysical principle which sprang from the Greek speculation of the infinite Spirit exalted above all human limitation, the ground of the existence and of the order of the universe."[2] So, too, when we muse upon God's relation to man, we feel the force of the lines in which the chief poet of this movement has sung of

[1] Wallace, *Prolegomena to the Logic of Hegel*, new edit., p. 32.

[2] Pfleiderer, *Gifford Lectures*, vol. i. p. 127.

> "that Infinite
> Within us, as without, that All-in-all,
> And over all, the never-changing One
> And ever-changing Many, in praise of Whom
> The Christian bell, the cry from off the mosque,
> And vaguer voices of Polytheism
> Make but one music, harmonizing 'Pray.'" [1]

So, once more, no small part of the credit for what has been called the rediscovery of Jesus by the nineteenth century is due to these inquirers. They, at least, have urged his moral ubiquity more persuasively than others, and have taught that to-day men in all ranks may hear his voice and walk in his ways without one whit more difficulty than the fishers of Galilee or the pharisee of Tarsus. Some, no doubt, may be attracted by different types of Christian goodness. One may hold to Paul, the author of a systematically subtle faith; another to James, the apostle of good deeds; a third to John, the herald of a mystic affection. But all are shown to be necessary parts in a mighty plan. They subserve their vocation in the universal order, and this, in turn, is vindicated by a view of life which looks upon nothing as common or unclean. Knowledge has its office, so too belief, so too

[1] Tennyson, *Death of Œnone*, pp. 34, 35.

works. All are logically connected, and thus come to have absolute value. Hence the optimism of the speculative school, by which its contribution to theology in a manner stands crowned. "The reverse side of universal sin and need of redemption is found in the universal ability of all men to be redeemed, which is based on the indestructible essence of the divine image that is in every man, and, even amidst the thorn-thicket of sin and worldly lust, never becomes entirely extinct, but remains, the living germ of a better future, of a new man in God. . . . In this manner an entirely new estimation of man is reached. It is no longer what he is and does externally, or what he is considered by the community to be, that decides his worth. This is determined by his inmost feeling, the tendency of his soul towards the divine good, even if this be at first only a painful regret for the loss of it, and a heartfelt desire to regain it."[1]

Yet, if progress is to continue, if truth, always sought but grasped partially and with much misgiving, is ever to be unveiled, one cannot afford to be blinded, even by sense of

[1] Pfleiderer, in *The New World*, vol. i. pp. 414, 415.

exceptional obligation, to the difficulties and weaknesses attendant upon this theological scheme. And, in the first place, though occupying admirable ground for protest, the members of this group, it seems to me, run to extremes. As against the crude superstition that sees in Christianity nothing but a miraculously founded organization, whose associates are destined to heaven, leaving hell as the portion for all others; as against an equally crude materialism, which traces in the sons of men no more than a higher, and perhaps undesirable, animality, the protest can scarcely be overvalued. Yet there are reasons for fearing that it has still to subject itself to clarifying criticism — a criticism, by the way, that had far better come from within. The system of the universe envisaged by it embodies a conception so overpowering that little play is left for the single parts of the organism. Philosophy of the absolute, speculation concerning the infinite, tend to rule out theological conceptions, strictly so called, of God the Father, of God the sinless, of God the personal friend of the truly religious man. The current sets towards emphasizing an ideal plan for which

man is in no wise responsible, but in the interests of which, on cognizing it, he is bound to co-operate with the Eternal. The drift is clearly away from personal religion, where the life of the individual predominates, and is as clearly in the direction of what many now openly pursue, as a substitute for religion, under the euphemism of "ethical culture," where membership of a social organism and its attendant claims swamp other considerations.

The phenomenal *manifestations* of the absolute, of God, — phenomenal because "differences" and therefore imperfect — are the subject-matter of the inquiry. They presuppose God. The infinite as such must have existed eternally. Man may think not, but this is his own fault. He laboriously follows out aspects of deity, which are such only because they co-exist with many other elements in the absolute nature. But *aspects* have no import in separation. Self and not-self must be united, "we are necessarily driven to think of them as the manifestation or realization of a third term." In other words, so far from the presupposed unity being nothing but the unity, as we had naturally anticipated, it inevitably turns out

to be, and is constantly regarded as, the sole reality. At the same time, it is to be noted that this recognition is kept well within metaphysical limits. The question of the personality of God, accordingly, is not so pressing as it might otherwise conceivably be. Many will agree that a defensible discretion is shown here. The omission may be accepted as legitimate, if it be remembered that the result is a description of the ultimate unity in abstract terms which are equally applicable to other "things," using this word in the conventional and widest sense. Further, language usually associated with ethical and personal qualities tends to be conspicuous by its absence. Every man, seeing that he is a partaker in self-consciousness, may be held to conform to the standard of humanity. He is one with God, meaning thereby that deity, *quâ* union of subject and object, is the immanent presupposition of an intelligence like his. Looked at from another point of view, the whole question is one of analytic exhibition of the contents of self-consciousness, corrected by observation of the synthesis involved in their eventual co-operation. By careful inspection, man, the

individual, finds all the leading traits of consciousness in general within himself. But these are the specific marks of the unity which is the motive-force of universal consciousness. The "single life," accordingly, needs but to arrive at an explicit understanding of this presupposition in order to solve the problem of its own relation to God. The question, to put it otherwise, is not one of sin, as the discussion of religion might lead many to expect. It deals rather with evil and imperfection, matters peculiar to moral life. In the theoretical circle too, the difficulty is not one of personal responsibility, but of collective ignorance.

The religious problem consequently gives place to the philosophical. In other words, it is not man's relation to a supreme personal being that demands consideration, but on the contrary, some men's interpretation of the essential nature of the cosmological vicissitudes of the race. The reply is to an inquiry about the unity of experience, and the results thus obtained are next employed to light up the dark places of religion. The truth is that, as has been so often urged against Hegel, the speculative interests have super-

seded both the religious and the psychological. Intellect, abstracted from will and feeling, holds the field. Now in all intellection an element of will is present. Concentration of thought, for example, implies effort to exclude the irrelevant, and to reproduce vividly all that is germane to the point at issue requires active power. There is a certain energizing "disposition of the heart," even in dealing with logical abstractions, which, as might pertinently be alleged, forbids unquestioning acceptance of the analysis into self, not-self, and the unity mediating between them as the all-sufficient account of self-consciousness. No doubt, it would be an error to declare that the speculative theologian excludes feeling; he only dismisses a view of religion which would base explanation upon a mere vague mood. Yet, at the same time, he approaches the problems of religion from the speculative side exclusively. They, among many other things, are to be turned over curiously, and regarded from without inwards. Any case of self-consciousness will, in the main, subserve the purpose as well as another. If it embody, as by definition it must, the integral elements enumerated, then the trans-

ition from religious to speculative considerations is evidently held to be unavoidable. The latter cannot but absorb the former. God is to be known, literally by an effort of mind; there is no searching for deity in the personal experience of the religious man, far rather a calm statement of the reasons why men, being what they are, must fall into the class of religious animals. The existence of God, though implicit in the premises by their very statement, is established by way of inference. Little or no allowance is made for what Ulrici[1] aptly called *Gefühls-perception*, and thus an integral portion of the *fact* — as distinguished from the *notion* — of religion is eliminated. The tendency of the method, to put it briefly, is to evaporate the personal element in religious experience, and to replace it by a common factor. Certainly this lends simplicity to the treatment, and makes it possible to grapple more easily with the multitudinous details of religious life, which, however, when all is said, are no more than records of individual trial. Indeed, when in their first freshness, and vivifying others by the magic

[1] Cf. *Gott und die Natur*, p. 606.

spell lent them by their originator, they are so wholly personal as to be significant only because they bear the stamp of this or that man's *Ahnung*. The mere analysis of universal self-consciousness or of consciousness in general, to be plain, objectifies too much the basis proposed for a philosophy of religion, and consequently accords fatally inadequate consideration to the subjective side. On this scheme, allowance cannot be made for those dumb thousands who, though not partakers in "religious genius," yet operate as an embodied conscience in their immediate, though often very narrow, circle.

What this tendency involves has been very distinctly stated by Mr. F. H. Bradley, in his brilliant book which would scarcely be miscalled the *Disappearance of Reality*. "Nothing is outside the Absolute, and in the Absolute there is nothing imperfect. . . . The individual never can in himself become an harmonious system. And in the wider ideal to which he devotes himself, no matter how thoroughly, he can never find complete self-realization. For even if we take that ideal to be perfect, and to be somehow completely fulfilled, yet, after all, he himself is

not totally absorbed in it. If his discordant element is for faith swallowed up, yet faith, no less, means that a jarring appearance remains. And, in the complete gift and dissipation of his personality, *he*, as such, must vanish; and with that, the good is, as such, transcended and submerged. . . . Goodness is an appearance, it is phenomenal, and therefore self-contradictory."[1] In other words, the protest against raw supernaturalism and equally raw materialism has run too far towards aggrandizing the transcendental universality of the timeless one, and has taken too little account of the active personality of the temporal many. So far as one is capable of grasping this immensely difficult problem, it may be suggested that the correction is not unlikely to come from the side of religion. It is therefore of the last importance that theology should not too mildly acquiesce in its own reduction to a subordinate department of speculative inquiry. Personality, especially in those aspects wherein it differs from mere thinghood, must put in a claim for reconsideration. Man, at least as a religious being, cannot afford to class this with

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 419.

"appearances"; indeed, even were he rich enough to do so, his ability to compass the bare statement might very well be called in question. For personality is the highest category known to us, and the more we can expand its content, the less hopeless does the search for absolute truth become. Only in a spiritual person limited like ourselves, yet uplifted as we are not, can we obtain any reassuring glimpse of the infinity for which we yearn.

But, more than any theoretical analysis, the immediate character of the speculative method in practice demands close attention. The simplicity and workability of the scheme are correlative to its metaphysical formality. By a logical process universal results are reached, and then so applied as to reduce differences and smooth away difficulties. On this point, indeed, an explicit deliverance has been given. "Simplification is valuable only because it enables us to see our way through many details and complexities which have hitherto resisted all the efforts of our thought, but which become pliant and intelligible to him who has grasped the law of their variation. If, *after* we have reached such a universal or law, such a simple explanation

of many complex phenomena, we are sometimes at liberty to dismiss many of the particular details from our memory, and to regard ourselves as possessing in the law the substance and kernel of them all, this is only because in the law we have a clue to guide us to the particulars which at any time it may seem necessary to verify. . . . In a sense such a universal may be beyond knowledge; not, however, because it is too vague and general for definite thought, but for the opposite reason that it is *inexhaustible*."[1] Such procedure is, perhaps, fair to epochs, to general movements, and to illustrious men; it also lacks the flexibility necessary to estimate in individual cases the mood naturally assumed by religious aspiration. The objective delineation of religions as steps in the historical sequence which at length enables a human being

> "God only to behold, and know, and feel,
> Till, by exclusive consciousness of God,
> All self annihilated, it shall make
> God its identity,"

is a mighty theme. But the sequence and its stages, largely to the exclusion of the

[1] E. Caird, *Evol. of Rel.*, vol. i. pp. 151–153.

elements constitutive of them, are forced into progressive shape by the method which has reference more to the outlines of a developing order than to the concrete evolving matter. As concerns religions, this matter consists of persons; they are the reals of the region now before us. In place of a synthesis directly touching them, there is given a classified statement of the results which they, on the presupposition of the common factor in their nature, necessarily wrought. An analytic of types, albeit immense in suggestiveness as in sweep, hardly has that direct contact with life, or rather, with historical lives, on which alone interpretation of religion must in the first instance be based. Its formulism smacks suspiciously of medieval realism. Speculative principles tend to become divorced from recorded instances, the latter are too frequently set aside in order that the relations wherein they are found may be adjusted to the general conceptions or ideas that have been assumed to constitute the significance of members in a system — religious, philosophic, or other. It need scarcely be said, however, that, in every application of the theory, such a partial line is

not rigorously followed. But, undoubtedly, a determined effort is made to restrain the facts within the compass of a definite scheme, and this seems to produce a certain confusion. The universal, or presupposed unity in self-consciousness, is not kept sufficiently distinct from the common element which appears on analysis of selected instances of this self-consciousness. The former is strictly *a priori*, the latter *a posteriori;* the one is the product of deduction, the other of induction. Neither proves itself, yet both are worked together, and so they do not serve to mutual verification after each has been applied in the abstract. The latter, accordingly, rapidly wanes. Broad generalizations characterize the conclusion, and these are obtained, not so much by a critical examination of the evidence as by an interested vindication of carefully selected examples. When the treatment is more detailed, as of Judaism and Christianity, the recorded occurrences are required to illustrate the speculative presuppositions. The *a priori* is made to reproduce itself in the *a posteriori;* the *a posteriori* is honored just in so far as it confirms the *a priori*. The Christian religion, for instance, is the first to

embody an explicit perception of the mediating unity that informs the difference between self and not-self. But, on the other hand, Christ is not represented as the one person in whom the Absolute became incarnate after a peculiar kind. Objectively, that is, Christianity is fitted to the method; subjectively — on the side to which religion is specially germane — the method can afford to pass over the personal element in the Founder of this faith, or, at least, to interpret the historic events of a single life in consonance with an ideal conspectus — which could perfectly advance without them. All men being heirs of universality, on account of the diffusion of self-consciousness, no single one can be regarded as the inheritor of a kind of spirit constituting him alone the creator of a new departure. The head, that is, the theory, makes the theologian.

These suggestions may be further emphasized by pointing to a tendency — due, as must be remembered, to the method adopted — to treat the *evolution* of religion as if it were a *logical process* of development. Now, taking the term evolution, commonly employed by speculative theologians as a suffi-

cient description of their work, certain of its implications call for notice. It implies a selective synthesis which is the result neither of subjective energy nor of objects themselves, but of both combined. Within the sphere of philosophy, we take this to imply that, when a difficulty and a solution occur to the thinker, the latter ought to be brought to the test of objective interpretation. The nature of the environment within which it is to be applied cannot fail to affect it and to alter its first appearance — its aspect as it sprang brand new from the brain of its originator. But this procedure can hardly receive application in the case of a logical process inevitable in all self-consciousness, and therefore, not only independent, but even productive of environment. The tendency is, on the contrary, to view the whole movement as one of inner development. Self-consciousness has from the beginning of time certain qualities within itself. These, by its own inner determination, it renders explicit in religions. History is not to be explained as a true evolution throughout which a selective synthesis takes place in a conditioning medium, and issues in a series of determinate

variations. Perforce it is a neuter, valuable, not for itself, but as illustrating a prescribed theory, and intelligible only when it corroborates a specified thesis. The *development* from within self-consciousness, according to the elements constituent of its nature, tends to obliterate the *evolution* according to the co-operating, changing, yet determining factors in living, or concrete, advance. The history of religions receives too little attention, the translation of some of its incidents into the language of an "intellectual naturalism" claims too much. The personal experience of a man who, at a certain period of his career, came to consider himself one with God, cannot induce the same interest as the theory of the manner in which the widespread belief in a God-man inevitably arose out of the eternally fixed factors of self-consciousness. The *real evolution* in the one case pales before the *theoretical development* in the other. The method — of evolution — may, of course, be applicable to all the phenomena of religion; on this point we do not at present dogmatize. Assuredly it is not so applied here. The determination to read all religions in the light of the highest religious achievement is

productive of a formalism that seems too intolerant of intermediate phenomena, and therefore hardly accepts the task of evaluating the indispensable environment. The logic, which admittedly is in life, appears to be on the point of denying that it requires this theatre, at least it attempts to lay down the law to influences that unquestionably react upon the principle thus imposed. In fine, it is possible to trace a movement towards a conclusion which means that the keen in intellect are blessed, not that they stand in no need of the kingdom of God, but because they are equipped to take it by force of argument.

IV. *The Treatment of Christianity by the Speculative School*

Passing from these more general questions, the treatment accorded to Christianity demands close attention. It naturally falls into two parts. The first concerns the nature of the Christian religion and St. Paul's estimate of its import. The historical evolution of life and doctrine in the Christian communities constitutes the second. Although similar views mark the account of both sub-

jects, they lead to different results in each case, so that separate notice is unavoidable.

Whatever may be said of the doctrines ultimately worked up into Christian theology in the long course of its development, there can hardly be a doubt that, in its beginnings, Christianity was purely Jewish. Little abstract thinking and no learning were at its birth, but rather an overmastering sense of man's relation to deity. The God of the Jews was alone capable of furnishing the divine nature necessary to constitute one of the factors in this spiritual communion. Christianity grows directly out of Judaism, because it supplies a systematic account of God's indwelling in man. The older religions had here rested satisfied with a series of naïve suggestions — naïve in that no attempt was made to see that they tallied with one another. As I have tried to show elsewhere,[1] the Jews did not set God afar off. But small effort was put forth to show precisely why "the prayer of the humble pierces the clouds," why, that is, a specific attitude of the human spirit implies a response in the divine nature which results in intercom-

[1] *Aspects of Pessimism*, pp. 3–9.

munion. Christianity was a further contribution to the explicit statement of the subjective element that forms the very nerve of all religion. It is *the* subjective religion, rather than Buddhism, or Stoicism, or Judaism. For, here pre-eminently, both in the Person of its Founder, and in the character of the belief which he requires from his professors, the inner, or personal, process inseparable from highest religious aspiration stands at length completely revealed. It may very well be that Christianity is the "absolute" religion. No further exemplification of the essentials of the religious state is necessary; humanly speaking, no other may be possible. But, with respect to the individual who is, after all, the centre of spiritualized life, it is as truly the most subjective of religions; for in its most specific quality it consists of a personally realized relation between the worshipper and God, a relation rendered possible by Christ. To term it the "absolute" religion, in a metaphysical sense, is no more than a way of transforming it into a philosophy, for it implies an attempt at reducing the endless differences of its revivifying power in each separate case to a simple, or abstractly

logical, expression; and this issues in a definite method of interpretation that is not only inadequate to the historical facts, but leads also to concealment of the very essence of the religion itself.

Viewed as a whole, the speculative presentation of Christ's mission, and the conceptions of His person and position, are governed by an all-pervading *tendenz*. That is to say, the relations in which Christianity is expected to stand to other stages in the development of religion are preconceived, and the occurrences adduced, like the individuals portrayed, are skilfully found to arrange themselves as had been anticipated. "It is a law of human history that principles and tendencies which are really universal, should at first make their appearance in an individual form, as if bound up with the passing existence of a particular nation or even of a single man. . . . It is only the greatest of all instances of this law of development which we see in the early history of Christianity. . . . Thus the way in which, in the thought of the disciples, the ordinary limitations of finitude and humanity — of that in the finite world and in man which separates them from

God — gradually drop away from the image of Christ, has in it something which, though unexampled in degree, yet *agrees in kind with the ordinary process* by which the ideal reveals itself in and through the real."[1] The process of the Absolute, metaphysically conceived, is read into history, and history is unfolded as the exhibition of this process, in which there are endless differences in degree but none in kind. Once clearly formulated, the movement cannot be conceived as energizing otherwise, but the persons incident to it might quite well be replaced, seeing that degrees of manifestation are not tied down to their authors as are complete divergences in kind. Christ is often admitted to have been unique in his work; no such admission can be entertained with respect to his person, for a theory that construes the evolution of religion as a developing series of conceptions — of and from God — cannot possibly permit any divergences in kind within its progress. If it did, the process would inevitably break down. Something for which it could not account would be wedged in between its two halves.

[1] E. Caird, *Evol. of Rel.*, vol. ii. pp. 220, 228–229.

Accordingly, unavoidable tendencies shape the construction of Christ and Christianity. The person becomes less and less, the speculative Idea of his achievement more and more. The systematized statement of the manner in which an individual caused his career to epitomize "the eternal circulation of the divine life" replaces the absolute significance of the vehicle of this revelation. As Shakespeare or Goethe stand to poetry, as Beethoven or Mozart to music, as Cæsar or Cromwell to war and government, as Raphael and Michael-Angelo to painting and sculpture, so Jesus stands to religion. He is first, not perhaps among his peers, but certainly among his compeers. The single life is in every case an instance of a universal principle. Given a particular *Weltanschauung*, and the speculative interpretation follows. We have to remember that it is no more than an interpretation, and that it is not a part of the religious man's spiritual "business philosophically to arrange matters between the Christian-theistic *Weltanschauung*, on the one side, and the deistic, or pantheistic, or materialistic, on the other, which latter have first to

fight out their mortal conflict with one another."[1]

In contradistinction, it may be submitted that Christianity does not start from an analytic of self-consciousness as revealed in man, but from a certain historical fact — the Person of Christ. It embodies, not merely a philosophic scheme dealing with rationality, but rather a kind of spiritual presence never before exemplified and never repeated since. Its marvel does not lie so much in the whole evolution of which it is a part, as in the circumstance that it put an end to one developing series and initiated another that still goes on. This it accomplished through a peculiar personality in whom *alone* the saving power of deity was made known. Christ is far more than an episode in the life-history of a race in which the divine nature has been always manifesting itself from less to greater fulness. He is the sole mediator between God and man, in the sense that only by seeking to find salvation from sin through him can men ever hope to experience that inner oneness with God wherein religion is consummated.

[1] Beyschlag, *Leben Jesu*, vol. i. p. 10.

The leading problem for any systematic explanation of Christianity lies here. Theology must attempt to show that "for the Christian of the present the historical appearance of Jesus can become accessible as something undoubtedly certain and intelligible as God's revelation," and that Christianity really "arises in us when the good, as a power of judging and yet rescuing us, becomes through Jesus Christ a fact in our lives."[1] The divinity of Christ, as thus construed, is inseparable from his religion, because it is the conclusion at which men necessarily arrive, if they realize that God alone could have conformed to God as he did. Christianity is thus, in one aspect, a distinctively *subjective* religion. For, it implies an inward change, dependent, however, upon appreciation of the same change as actually personalized once, and upon the spiritual perception that such transformation, ending, as it did, in unity with God, could

[1] Cf. *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott,* Herrmann, *passim.* The essential value of the Ritschlian argument is that it has shown the impossibility of a theoretical proof of the Christian faith. Unless Christ so appeals to a man as to bring home to him that *here* his highest ideal has been realized, every proof must fail to carry conviction.

have been wrought out by God alone. According to Christianity, men become fellow-workers with God — they must find the disposition. He has guaranteed in Christ what the results will be. Not an inherited self-consciousness, but an inner experience that Christ has, and can transmit, saving grace, constitutes the core of Christianity, and firmly establishes its universal nature. In his own workaday life, each must prove for himself, reproduce in his own character, what the disciples testify of Christ. Only then will he conform to the faith in a personal redeemer without which Christianity has no more than a doubtful logical superiority over other religions. Indeed, the historical facts, which have withstood all the fire of modern New Testament criticism, admit of no other conclusion. The continued life of Christ in the sweet experience of his people is not accounted for on the speculative method; and the method can only be applied by eviscerating the recorded incarnation, atonement, and resurrection of all except an abstract — an intellectual — significance.

The emphasis laid upon St. Paul's contri-

bution to the progress of Christianity, and the deductions which it is necessary to make from his doctrine, go far to corroborate what has been already said. The proneness to minimize the personal element, to be "careful of the type" and "careless of the single life," is here accentuated. "For St. Paul, what we may in a narrower sense call the personal element of the gospel history disappeared altogether; and Jesus was simply the Christ, the living embodiment of the Messianic idea, which at once disappointed the old Messianic expectations of the Jews, and gave them a higher fulfilment." This is so extreme as to remind one of Von Hartmann's extraordinary construction of the New Testament history, in which Jesus appears as the originator of *das Judenchristenthum*, and St. Paul as the founder of Christianity.[1] A comparison of the two *tendenz* interpretations is interesting as illustrating how history can be led to speak as the historian desires. The speculative reading, no doubt, is far richer than Von Hartmann's, still the significant truth remains that it lays stress upon

[1] Cf. *Das religiöse Bewusstsein der Menschheit*, ss. 514–532 and 546, *seq.*

the indispensableness of St. Paul, and enforces certain aspects of Pauline teaching for special purposes. It is the St. Paul of the Areopagus, — "in him we live, and move, and have our being," — and the St. Paul of the eighth chapter of Romans, — "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," — whom Professor Pfleiderer, for instance, enhances.

St. Paul when he insists on the atonement is not so significant. "The material out of which Paul built up the structure of his theological thought consisted not merely of gold and precious stones, but also in part of ignoble and perishing things. . . . Paul therefore started indeed from the dualism common to him with his time, of spirit and flesh, heavenly and earthly world; but this dualism — and this is what was distinctively new in his view — was overcome in principle in the *one* person of Jesus Christ, the spiritual man who sprang from heaven and was elevated to heaven; and from this *one* historical point the advancing subdual of it, through the abiding dominion of the spirit of Christ in the Christian community, is once for all secured. The overcoming in principle of

this dualism in the person of Christ is indeed at first still represented by Paul in a quite supernatural form — that is, to speak more precisely, it is not the earthly person of Jesus, but the transformation which took place with him through his death and resurrection, in which Paul sees the earthly flesh overcome and the spirit of the heavenly man set free as the animating principle of a new humanity. . . . This theory of a vicarious atonement, in which we may perceive a juristic distortion of the ethical thought of Isaiah liii., was, indeed, never referred by the Phariseean school to the Messiah, because the worldly political direction of their Messianic idea excluded the thought of his suffering and dying. But when the Pharisee Paul, after his conversion, recognized the Messiah in the crucified Jesus, and began to reflect upon the significance and the purpose of this death on the cross, it was quite natural that he should apply the universal theory of his school to the special case of the martyr-death of Jesus, and should therefore see in this death an expiation contrived by God for the atonement of the sinful world, for our redemption from the curse of

the law, for the acquisition of our righteousness. . . . The death of Christ is indeed, according to Paul, primarily the objective act of expiation carried out in Christ as the vicarious head of mankind."[1]

St. Paul, when he preaches the uniqueness of Christ, is found to hinder Christianity rather than further its advance. "In St. Paul's teaching there begins a kind of separation of Christ from humanity and a kind of identification of him with God, which is practically a return to the Jewish opposition of God and man. . . . He regards Christ's life in the flesh as an episode between a life in glory before his birth and a life in glory after his death, and thus takes him out of all the ordinary conditions of humanity. In this way he seems to deny that union between the divine and the human which was the essential lesson of the gospel of Jesus." Now, as concerns history, is it not exactly in these two tendencies that the value of St. Paul's view of Christianity lies? He won his place as the greatest religious genius of Christendom just because he realized so completely the

[1] Pfleiderer, *Gifford Lectures*, vol. ii., pp. 157, 161–162, 167–168, 172.

personal contribution of Christ to His religion, and perceived that His salvation was free, by appreciation of His services engendering faith, to Jew and Gentile alike. He sums up the "absoluteness" of Christianity when he says, "Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."[1] God remains the universal, as the speculative writers contend, but Christ is recognized as "the one and universal medium and actualizing cause," which they are precluded by their method from admitting. Relying on the genuine Epistles,[2] was it not St. Paul's distinctive office to have discovered, not, as we have been told, the idea of Messiahship in Christ, but on the contrary, the necessary implication of divinity in the fact of fulfilment of the Messianic office? The office has become so united with the person that St. Paul's lasting merit is to

[1] 1 *Corinthians* viii. 5–6.

[2] Cf. *Romans* ix. 5, x. 12–13, xiv. 6–9; *Philippians* i. 21, ii. 11; 1 *Corinthians* i. 9, ii. 16, xii. 3.

have perceived *all* that Jesus' life involved — that he, and he only, was the Christ, the divine Son sent to incarnate, and the sole incarnation of, the kind of life that he lived. The Sonship, as read by St. Paul, is an actual cause destined to be exclusively devoted to a peculiar function.

The meagre Christology, already outlined above, takes its source in the implicit denial of originating power to personality. It is easy on this method, — to take an illustration, — to fall into the error of constructing misleading parallels between say, Buddhism and Christianity. Just because the former is a subjective religion, so-called, and because the latter contains a subjective element, which speculative theology fails to appreciate, the error originates. Nevertheless, in spite of a common search for salvation, a common integral asceticism, and certain external qualities attributed to Jesus and Gautama alike, the two religions are, in all essentials, most luridly contrasted. The person of the Christ is Christianity; the person of Gautama recedes more and more as investigation progresses, while his *system* gains ever-increasing prominence. "The language of Buddhism

has no word for the poesy of Christian love."[1] "The sin of self," so fittingly celebrated in *The Light of Asia*, is of a purely intellectual matter, and has no reference to that self-seeking which is condemned in the Sermon on the Mount. Màra and the Devil do not tempt in the same way. Gautama would have missed salvation had he insisted on his own personality; Christ saves men only by the perception that his personality was indispensable. The conversion necessary in the one case has literally no point of contact with that desired in the other. The Buddha is "converted" by an *objective* transformation, by a new mental synthesis respecting the world. He becomes "holy" when he understands that bodily life contains no satisfaction; he is "saved" when he knows that damnation and safety are equally meaningless.

The speculative argument lends itself to the perpetuation of such mistakes on account of its false perspective. The contention is that Jesus, like other men, was a vehicle of universal principles, or, as metaphysicians would say, a symbol of essential truth. I

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 292.

cannot agree that the explanation is satisfactory. If nothing more, it confounds Christ's person with his works. The one, as I maintain, was primary, the others alone were secondary. The uniquely consecrated life, by being set in a timeless series of lives, may be partially rationalized; the uniqueness and the daily resurrection in other lives are not to be accounted for thus. The historical construction, proceeding even now mainly along the lines of the Tübingen school, is addressed to the former problem. St. Paul is the starting-point, and his antagonism to the Judaizing Christians forms the type of a series of collisions that constitute the motive-force in the after development of the religion. All these dialectical movements, which are partly objective in character, presuppose an inner division in Christian theory itself. Now the pantheistic element predominates, again the monotheistic, and by the constant interaction between the two, advance is conditioned. There can be little doubt that to this hour writers have permitted their view to be too exclusively colored by the theological deductions of such thinkers as F. C. Baur and Biedermann. Although the former

forced New Testament criticism to become scientific, he employed methods which are quite opposed to sound historical research.[1] For, the self-revelation of an immanent idea was to his mind the essence of history. Organism was investigated to the exclusion of environment; external conditions were minimized in an anxiety to prove that a preconceived metaphysical principle can be applied to remove every *crux*. This procedure may serve to throw a certain light upon some large aspects of the development of Christianity, it cannot follow out the course of the evolution with sufficiently minute persistence. The struggle between Christianity and Rabbinical scholasticism; its conflict with neo-Platonism; the division between the Church and the world of the Middle Ages; the opposed objectivity of Catholicism and subjectivity of the Reformers; the contrasted Hellenism of Erastians and Hebraism of Calvinists, — all are undoubtedly aspects of the progress of a civilization into which Christianity has entered. But to allege that they represent the evolution of

[1] Cf. Ritschl, in *Jahrb. für deuts. Theol.*, vol. vi. pp. 429, *seq.*

Christianity itself is to disregard many other occurrences pre-eminently deserving at least equal consideration. And, coming now to the second point, it is also to forget that the evolution of Christianity consists in the long vicissitudes through which Christ himself has gone in relation to persons who revere him. For its advance can never be exhibited with historical accuracy if it be viewed simply as the logical movement of "the Christian idea." Its manifoldness, which eludes all categorizing, is due to its inmost nature as an objective record of the subjective attempts that men have been making in all the ages of our era to realize, each for himself, what the revelation of God in Christ implies. The importance of Christianity lies, that is, in the office performed by Christ for every individual apart, rather than in an elaborated conception of a principle which expresses itself in him "as being the first to break through the Jewish division between the divine and the human, yet without falling into the gulf of an abstract pantheism, or losing any of that moral idealism in which the purifying power of monotheism lay." Christ, the Person, is only to be grasped by

religious means, and the history of Christianity is no more and no less than the practical illustration of the operation of these means in myriad lives, and under the most divergent circumstances. Throughout, it is largely subjective, because the "absoluteness" of Christianity consists in the experience of unity with Jesus, and, through him, with God. And, as each personality is a separate universe, so his sense of salvation is unique, be the philosophical explanation of God's immanence what it may.

In short, a *theory* of Christ, though necessarily of a wholly different kind from that which was diffused among the Jews prior to his advent, has been employed to perform a precisely parallel service. A want is thus supplied — a want due to a specific collocation of intellectual and ethical circumstances. But whether the satisfaction sufficiently tallies with the facts of Christ's appearance and of his continuous life in the souls of believers, is another matter. Be this as it may, what he effected was not brought about once for all by the co-operation of prior and contemporary influences. He was not, and is not, a mere vehicle. His genius is not the

simple expression of what others thought and urgently desired; it is a living force which still remains and reproduces its own qualities in the lives of men now and here. "Heroes" and "representative men" are the quintessence of epochs; he is the germ which fructifies at all times. In this respect he is without parallel, and so we cannot separate his *person* from his work.

At the close of the speculative interpretation the central theological problems — of God and of Christ — are thus problems as much as ever. For it cannot be denied that, both in theology and philosophy, the positions here reviewed demand very careful consideration. If we are to give up Christ's mediation till he becomes "little more than the spiritual brother in God, and Christ-worship becomes practically impossible;" if we are to adopt this theology "with all its catholicity, but also with all its vagueness and its want of touch with the practical religious life," — we must at least do so, not on authority, but by conscientiously rethinking the entire scheme for ourselves. No other method is in any respect defensible relative to matters so fundamental. The

logic of the situation substantially is — Must we, in order to a metaphysical theory of God and a speculative explanation of the life of Christ, put up with a bare minimum of personal religion?

RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY

I. *The Presuppositions of the Ritschlian School*

In approaching the Ritschlians, a preliminary warning must be issued. Their standpoint is, on the whole, so foreign to the modes of thought with which the majority of us are familiar, that a special difficulty accompanies the statement of a theory already sufficiently complex and, as one might perhaps add, shifting. "It is a system which cannot be classified under any definite species, which overturns the officially recognized divisions."[1] I can only premise that I shall attempt to be as fair as human weakness permits.

To grasp the general basis of this latter-day theological phenomenon, one cannot do better than take note of the historical tendencies that have produced it. For this, like other conspicuous movements, is the expression

[1] P. Lobstein, *La Notion de la Pré-existence du Fils de Dieu*, p. 129.

of a want. The constructive systems of the post-Kantian period, more especially Hegel's, resulted, as we have seen, in an extraordinary theological activity. In theology proper, as distinguished from Old or New Testament criticism, this took form in the restatement of dogma. As the philosophical interest predominated, the tendency was to bring theology into line with speculative theory. The "picture-thinking" of religion, as the contention ran, stood in need of reproduction under the strictly notional framework of philosophy. In consequence, dogmas, if not altered entirely, were at least transformed in meaning, and, after a time, it appeared to many that the old landmarks had been removed. A feeling of uncertainty and distrust began to assert itself. When this condition obtains, it usually happens that men cast about for a cause on which to throw blame. In this case, accusation would *prima facie* have been laid at the door of speculative theory. But just when Ritschl's thought was in movement, events so conspired that speculative rationalism was inevitably debited with the charge. The lean years of Hegelianism were beginning; positive science, in

access of triumph, was on the point of generating, not simply an exclusively empirical treatment of things, but a naturalistic explanation of the entire universe. Let alone air and earth and sea, exploited by Schelling and some of his followers, the theory of the Absolute was in process of discredit even in its own peculiar realms of morals and religion. Metaphysic seemed to have failed all round at the very moment when science appeared to have become altogether successful in its new and unscientific *rôle* of an ultimate theory. In these circumstances, the position evidently could not be secured for theology by any alliance with the much bethumped system-mongers. And, as a result, Ritschl was one of the first to take up the now well-worn watchword, "Back to Kant."

Catch-phrases are a little apt to be misleading. I suppose we must all go back to Kant, and keep going back to him, oftener, perhaps, than we should care to acknowledge, if we are to grasp the methods and problems of modern philosophy. But the phrase, in the historical connections now before us, came to imply rather a return to those portions of Kant that best consorted with the private

opinions of the pilgrim. Accordingly, the Ritschlian point of departure is a view that is not necessarily that of Kant, but for which, at the same time, Kant furnishes a certain defence.

To put the matter very summarily: In his criticism of the theoretical or rational faculty, Kant answers the question — How is science possible? And he shows that mind must supply certain constitutive factors to our perception of the general conditions of phenomena — to wit, time and space. It must, further, furnish categories capable of ordering sensations so that we may obtain knowledge of relations between particular phenomena. Science is possible because it exists, and reason enters of necessity into all its varied aspects. But, on this analysis, metaphysic does not exist. For, the self, the universe, and God are not phenomena; they are ideas of reason. They cannot be made objects of thought, and so no certain knowledge of them as they really are in themselves can be obtained. Thus man is seen to live a twofold life. As a thinking being, he can know phenomena, but not ultimate realities. As a moral being, he does not deal with

phenomena, but cannot help arriving at a conviction that God, freedom, and immortality constitute conspicuous realities in his experience — they are the mighty practical persuasions.

To get rid of metaphysic, and to conserve an inviolable sphere for theology, Ritschl and his followers laid hold upon this sharp distinction, and, it must be said, the majority of them have been prone to emphasize it. The certainties of science have nothing to do with the objects of theology, and the objects of theology hold no commerce with the certainties of science. I leave you the entire material world to dispose of as you please, says the Ritschlian to the Darwinian; at the same time, I warn you that the methods by which alone you can hold your kingdom are void of application in my own realm of moral and religious truth. Or, to use Ritschl's own words, "The contention has gradually become prevalent that religion and the theoretic knowledge of the world are distinct functions of the spirit, which, where they are applied to the same objects, do not even partially coincide, but go *in toto* asunder from each other."[1] Religion, to put it other-

[1] *Rechtfertigung und V.*, 3d edit., vol. iii. p. 185.

wise, necessarily implies a teleological conception of the world; science, a causal one. And, as each of these doctrines has its separate sphere, neither conflicts with the other. Theology, therefore, to secure its own results, must carefully abstain from any such incursion into the region of theoretical inquiry as metaphysical discussion inevitably involves. Philosophy is tabooed because it is no more than another kind of science — a pseudo-science.

To this point no one with a general appreciation of the concluding portion of the *Critique of Pure Reason* need have difficulty in grasping the position. But it must be confessed that the next step puzzles sorely. Ritschl and the majority of his school are not pure neo-Kantians of the Lange type; Lotze has entered as a new and disturbing element. Here the difficulty of fairly estimating the standpoint becomes serious. Nor is the necessity for overcoming it merely imaginary. For Ritschl himself has said, "Each theologian is under compulsion or obligation as a scientific man to proceed according to a definite theory of knowledge, of which he must be conscious himself, and the legitimacy of which he must

prove."[1] If this be so, one must frankly say that the adherents of the master afford but little aid. Two of the most prominent, Herrmann and Kaftan, differ from each other, the former being a more or less orthodox neo-Kantian, the latter leaning more or less towards Lotze, while neither agrees with his chief. In these circumstances the fairest course is to look at Ritschl's own view, and inquire whether it contains elements that account for these later divergences. Indeed, one is bound to this course, because it is by no means simple to perceive how Kant's theory and Lotze's are capable of unification.

Having accepted the negative results of the Kantian criticism, with their separation of the theoretical and practical, of the intellectual and the moral spheres, Ritschl went on to supplement these conclusions by adding a positive theory of knowledge. In this connection we have the most express statement of his indebtedness to his Göttingen friend and colleague, Lotze. He says summarily that there are three varieties of epistemological theory — Plato's, Kant's, and Lotze's. He sharply criticises the first, finds consider-

[1] *Theol. und Meta.*, p. 40.

able fault with the second, and proclaims, in so many words, his adhesion to the third.[1]

What, then, is Lotze's epistemology? It is a theory which, in opposition to absolute idealism, reposes upon the conviction that reality is immensely richer than thought, and, as a consequence, largely shapes itself in showing the poverty of thought. Thought is limited to the exercise of a purely formal function, and, accordingly, one must protest alike against the scientific man and the philosopher when they attempt to explain everything by its means. It exercises this function upon receipt of data. When these data are referable to the senses, the objects of the so-called outer world are cogitated; when they are referable to intuition, the ideal objects of art, of morals, of religion, come within ken. But, despite a predominating critical and analytic tendency, Lotze could not rest satisfied with this account of the conditions of subjective thought, and immediately passed over into metaphysic proper. He pointed out that, as space is a subjective form in which *we* place objects, all things, thus regarded, are phenomenal; they appear

[1] Cf. *Rechtfertigung und V.*, 2d edit., vol. iii. pp. 19, *seq.*

in spatial relations to us; they *are not so existent actually*, as far as we can know. What, then, are they? If our sensations be the occasion of phenomena that are not in any way like real things, what is a real thing? This problem implies the abolition of the thing-in-itself, and takes us beyond the Kantian position. Lotze's reply is — Although by thought we can never know that which "lies behind" a thing and gives it reality, yet we cannot help believing that the persistence of things is capable of explanation. Now, the only known fact of experience that persists through the varied changes of action and reaction, is the self. Accordingly, by analogy we attribute the nature of the self to every object. We conclude that things must be soul-like, otherwise they would not possess the permanent value in our experience which they certainly have. While for reason the world is no more than phenomenal, for faith it is a system of self-like beings. It has, that is, a value over and above all that we can learn about it by reflection. In other words, although asserting that we cannot know reality, Lotze proceeds to dogmatize concern-

ing it, because, otherwise, he could not, on his own terms, enter the sphere of metaphysic at all. He thus sets himself upon a see-saw between a thought that deals in phenomena and a faith that declares itself to be possessed of ultimate truth. Ritschl's theology had to face the difficulty of connecting the Kantian separation between reason and religion with the Lotzian co-operation between logic and life.

While, in his early thought, Ritschl was occupied with the Kantian division between religious practice and metaphysical theory,[1] he came later to feel the need of attaching some kind of ultimate value to the objects of religion.[2] So he seized upon Lotze's doctrine, and especially upon its "judgment of worth." Just as for Lotze an object must possess a self-like being on account of its place in experience, so for Ritschl, God, Christ, and the kingdom of God, irrespectively of their real nature — about which, indeed, we know nothing — so win upon us that we attach absolute value to them. As with Lotze, so with Ritschl, these "things" are held experientially to be of worth because

[1] Cf. *Rechtfertigung und V.*, 1st edit., vol. i. p. 410.
[2] Cf. *ibid.*, 2d edit., vol. iii. p. 20.

they fill a certain place in life. To this point Ritschl goes with Lotze. But, remaining true to his neo-Kantianism, and being, as one is forced to conclude, almost destitute of metaphysical interest, he ignores Lotze's further conclusion. He does not clearly perceive that, for his colleague, things are no more than phenomena, and that, in so far as they are valuable, they must be lifted up to the same level as the objects of religion, so to speak. Accordingly, he seeks both to eat his cake and have it. He throws all the discredit of phenomenality upon metaphysic from his neo-Kantian standpoint, and he attributes all the credit of operative value for us to theological objects from his Lotzian position. Nevertheless, he does not apprehend that, according to the latter, the objects of metaphysic are on a level with the objects of religion; both are of worth in experience for the same reasons. So at one moment he is engaged in widening the gulf between theology and metaphysic, at another in aggrandizing theology, or rather in rehabilitating its subject-matter, by a method which heals this separation entirely. He conserves an inviolable realm for theology by that strange

critical idealism which extrudes metaphysics; while he peoples this region by aid of a critical realism that is nothing if not metaphysical. We are not now concerned with the validity of either view in itself. But we have to bear in mind that the great difficulty of understanding Ritschl lies here. For, while he alleges that theology has one task, and metaphysic another, he at the same time proceeds to delineate the work of the former by means of a plan which abolishes this assumed difference of aim. With Lotze, the phenomenal, which Ritschl relegates to metaphysic, has no existence except in our representation; therefore things, in so far as they contribute estimable elements to our experience, must be explained by the same value-judgments as the objects of religion. To this indigestible philosophical appetizer may be traced the varied results of the theological meal alike with Ritschl himself and the members of his school. *De gustibus non est disputandum.* Or, to put it in another way, when staking out the theological field, Ritschl is entirely with Kant; when formulating and analyzing theological doctrines, he is entirely with Lotze. So in

the school itself, when theological affinities predominate, as with Herrmann, Kant is the great authority; when philosophical theory attracts, as with Kaftan, Lotze's thought is the more conspicuous.

Ritschl thus bases his theology upon two main theorems. The first, derived from a partial adoption of Kantian criticism, creates a cleavage between metaphysical, or scientific, and theological interests. Theology has nothing to do with origins or with ultimate nature. These are left to metaphysics and science, and, indeed, must be so far deceptive inquiries, because man can know only the phenomenal. The second, taken from Lotze, lays stress on the principle that, in our experience, ideal matters must be judged strictly in relation to ourselves. That is, they contribute to experience in so far as they impress us with an irresistible conviction of their own value; and this is capable of estimate. In theology we ask — What is the worth of God, or of Christ, or of the other objects of religious experience? — we are by no means concerned with what they actually are in themselves. These being the presuppositions, what now are the results?

II. *The Special Conclusions of the Ritschlian School*

Before proceeding to a brief statement of definite doctrines, it ought to be remarked that the Ritschlian method, both in its negative and positive aspects, has much originality. The critical achievement consists chiefly in an attack upon prevalent views by way of a new interpretation of theological history. The early period of Christianity, as the argument runs, was characterized by contamination of the pure and original teaching of Christ. A "fatal combination" thus took place between Christian religion and Greek philosophy and ethics. The aspiration, which is so plainly the mark of man's religious life, suffered eclipse, because theories of the world in its origin and import came to command the lion's share of theological attention. So, at a later time, writers like Anselm and Thomas Aquinas framed scholastic systems, instead of formulating religious dogmatics. After the Reformation the same movement continued, with the difference that one authority — the Bible — took the place of

another — the Latin Church. Towards the close of last century, Kant, in the concluding portion of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and his "critical idealist" followers proved that the dogmas of Catholicism and Protestantism equally *could* not be fundamentally true, because reason was so constituted as to be incapable of arriving at knowledge of reality. It therefore became necessary either to dispense with religion or to regard it from an entirely new standpoint. The positive work of the Ritschlian method was to provide the latter.

Seeing that all speculative theology — even if the speculative admixture be very slight — inevitably falls into the error of becoming a natural religion, and thus discredits revelation, the objective as well as the subjective content of Christianity must be derived from revelation. This alone will safeguard the conviction that we have of the value of our religious judgments. We are certain that they possess authority because we perceive them to be inspired; if they were not direct from God, they would not so affect us. Accordingly, "one walks on the path of Ritschl if, while independent of him in details, he is

directed by him to the task of forming a system of Christian doctrine starting from the principle that we are to think of God ὡς περὶ Χριστοῦ, that God's historical self-revelation is the beginning, not the concluding point of dogmatic reflection."[1] Faith compels us, as it were, and we hold that the "impression" derives its power and vividness from God's direct intervention. As Herrmann says: "What God can give without giving himself does not comfort the soul; the soul never rests until it has pierced through all things else, and reached God himself; a soul is free when it has risen above all that is not God. . . . In the picture of the man Jesus, the Catholic Christian sees the way which is to lead him to God. And he is not altogether wrong, for it is only because we know Christ that we can have a God so holy that he at once strikes down the sinner, and yet also forgives him, and reconciles him to himself by his own act. It is true also that we can only come to God by following Jesus, and by earnestly seeking to be truthful and upright like Jesus. But this is not enough. Christ is more to the Christian than all that.

[1] Kattenbusch, *Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, p. 81.

We do not merely come through Christ to God. It is truer to say that we find in God nothing but Christ. . . . God makes himself known to us, so that we may recognize him, through a *fact*, on the strength of which we can believe on him. . . . Our certainty of God has its root in the fact that within the realm of history to which we ourselves belong, we encounter the man Jesus as an undoubted reality. Inasmuch as Jesus raises us into fellowship with God, he is to us the Christ. The true Christian confession is that Jesus is the Christ. Rightly understood, however, it means nothing else than this; that through the man Jesus we are first lifted into fellowship with God. . . . Such confidence in the person and cause of Jesus implies something else; it implies that we think and must think of a Power greater than all things, which will see to it that Jesus, who lost his life in this world, shall be none the less victorious over the same world. This thought of such a Power lays hold of us as firmly as did that view of Jesus by which we were overwhelmed. This is the beginning of the consciousness within us, that there is a living God; this is the only real

beginning of an inward submission to him. As soon as trust in Jesus awakens this thought within us, we connect the thought at once with our experience of the inner life of Jesus as a present fact in our own life. The startled sense we felt at the disclosure of actual, living goodness in his person, and the sense of condemnation that we felt, are at once attributed by our souls to the power of God, of which we have now become conscious. The man who has felt these simple experiences cannot possibly attribute them to any other source. The God in whom he now believes for Jesus' sake is as real and living to him as the man Jesus is in his marvellous sublimity of character. If we ask, How does our thought of God come to include for us the thought of Omnipotence? the answer is, Clearly from the person of Jesus alone. We arrive at the thought of omnipotence because we are obliged to pay to Jesus the homage of believing that he must certainly succeed, even if all the world besides be against him. The omnipotence of which we become conscious in this way must be wielded by that same purpose which produced the life-

work of Jesus. Nothing else could rule it."[1]

But what are we told of God and of Christ?

1. *The doctrine of God.* According to the epistemological principles of Ritschl, it is impossible for man to know God as he actually exists. Notwithstanding the contempt for natural theology and for absolutism, this theory presents a certain parallelism to Spinoza's. The absolute substance, appears to man under the modes of thought and extension. It may originate millions of manifestations in addition to these; but man, on account of his defective experiential machinery, cannot apprehend more than the two. So, with Ritschl, God may have a being of his own, a nature special to himself. But man's knowledge is conditioned in such a way that he is confined to moral judgment in his recognition of deity. Kant had completed the final destruction of the so-called proofs of the being of God, and had shown that divine authority must be sought within — in the practical reason. That is to say, God is

[1] Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 24, 26, 51–52, 78–79.

known, not as he exists, but as we apprehend his subjective relation to ourselves. Now, his determination of himself in our ethical experience is love. "Either he is thus thought, or he is not thought at all." Ritschl's doctrine on this point appears to have undergone certain important changes. But these are connected, not so much with the central tenet of the teaching as with the sphere in which it holds valid. At first our theologian strove to go beyond Kant, by showing that, just as theology must recognize the validity of science within its own realm, so science must be forward to accord similar authority to theology. The idea of God, derived from moral judgment, has as much authority in experience as the idea of gravitation, derived from scientific research. Dogmatic theology finds its task in effecting the recognition of this proposition. This is another way of saying that each of the two great departments of experience embodies results of equal worth for man's life taken as a whole. One series of investigations enables us to maintain ourselves in the world, another puts us in a position to conserve ourselves as against the world. At a later period, how-

ever, Ritschl resiles from this conception, and falls back upon the pure neo-Kantian teaching. Following the only legitimate line along which his epistemological principles lead, he abandons the notion of forcing reason, on its theoretic side, to recognize the validity of the God-conception.[1] It is a "judgment of worth," a "helping idea" in the moral region; elsewhere it cannot be shown to possess application, and therefore is void of demonstrable validity. "God," accordingly, is the expression which we use when we state the *formal* shape attributed by us to "the will of love" which we spontaneously recognize as the content of divinity in our subjective moral life. For a deity whose garment is the universe we substitute one who is a "limiting conception" of the inner man. God thus exists only when he is recognized as an ethical starting-point. He need have no personality, nor need he possess any attribute save love, which is the standard of value whereby the ethical creature, man, appraises him. Love is God, and aught else is a formal addition made by us to this norm to which, by our nature, we

[1] Comp. *Rechtfertigung und V.*, vol. iii. p. 192 (1st edit.) with vol. iii. p. 214 (3d edit.).

must refer moral and religious origins. Deity, accordingly, comes to be the subjective hypothesis due to finite spiritual nature, just as "thinghood" is *the* objective judgment incident to finite intellectual nature.

2. *The value of the documents.* This may be dismissed with comparative brevity, because here the Ritschlian view is not so distinctive. In fact, the younger members of the school, just like their speculative opponents, accept the results of historical criticism and follow its methods. Ritschl's own originality in this department lay mainly in the importance which he accorded to the Old Testament writers. Christianity having been debased by pagan philosophy, one must look to Judaism for its purest spiritual ally. Christ set free the true spirit of the Jewish religion, and so the books of the New Testament which best preserve Jewish ideas, and exclude other admixture, are likely to be the most valuable. The idea of God developed in the religion of the Jews formed the matrix of Christianity; hence the immense importance to theology of a proper appreciation of Old Testament conceptions.[1] With

[1] Schulz's admirable work, *Old Testament Theology*, is probably the best result of this portion of Ritschl's teaching.

regard to the New Testament documents, Ritschl and his followers, though accepting the results of modern criticism, make special deductions of their own. The New Testament writings, and especially the synoptic Gospels, constitute the Christian's point of departure. But whereas for the speculative theologians the historical record is valuable only on account of the idea which it encloses, for the Ritschlians it is the picture, not simply of a special, but of the single, revelation. The synoptic Gospels and their companion books are not, indeed, to be regarded as an external authority imposing Christianity upon man. Nevertheless, they furnish the sole account of a life whose supernatural character, once recognized by the inner man, possesses the unique power of originating true religion. That is, the documents are in themselves without authority for faith, and so religion remains untouched by historical criticism. But, on the other hand, they delineate a career which so wins upon man's moral consciousness that he cannot help recognizing in it the single revelation of God. If he do not reach this stage, he has not even begun to be a Christian. For, as Herrmann

says, "There lie in each man the conditions of being able to find in the tradition of Jesus in the New Testament the picture of a man who through the power of his personal life holds us above the abyss."[1] The realization of these conditions is consequent upon loving appreciation of the New Testament story. Hence the value of the New Testament writings is that they afford the occasion of the moral judgment which is the ultimate guarantee of the supernatural character of Christianity. "Only he who yearns after an honest fulness for his own inner life can perceive the strength and fulness of that soul of Jesus, and whenever we come to see the person of Jesus, then, under the impress of that inner life breaking through all the veils of the story, we ask no more questions as to the trustworthiness of the Evangelists. The question whether the portrait of Jesus belongs to history or fiction is silenced in every one who learns to see it at all, for by its help he first learns to see what is the true reality of personal life. . . . The man who has had this experience can with heart-

[1] See Herrmann's contribution to the recent creed controversy in No. 50 of *Die Christliche Welt.*

felt confidence allow the historical criticism of the New Testament writings to have full play. If such investigation discovers contradictions and imperfections in the story, it also discloses by that very fact the power of the personality of Jesus, for that personality never lets the contradictions and imperfections of the story disfigure the clear features of that which it gave to me, namely, Jesus' own inner life. It is a fatal error to attempt to establish the basis of faith by means of historical investigation. The basis of faith must be something fixed; the results of historical study are continually changing. The basis of our faith must be grasped in like independent fashion by learned and unlearned, by each for himself. Howsoever the story may come to us, whether as sifted and estimated by historical criticism or not, the same results ought to follow and may follow in both cases, namely, that we learn to see in it the inner life of Jesus. . . . When we speak of the historical Christ we mean that personal life of Jesus which speaks to us from the New Testament, viewed as the disciples' testimony to their faith. Historical research can neither give this nor take it away, and

when we have it we know that we are at one with the living Church in possessing that gift of God which brings about our redemption."[1]

3. *The doctrine of Christ and of the cardinal tenets of the Christian faith.* The doctrine of Christ that follows logically from these premises is not difficult to perceive. At the outset, Christ's life becomes of absolute value as soon as, by an inner judgment, man recognizes in him the sole bearer of the divine revelation. The content of this judgment is that Christ alone satisfies the yearning for God — for the power that is able to lift man above the world. The divinity of Christ is, therefore, a consequence of his having so laid hold upon the sinner that the transforming influence cannot otherwise be explained. It is judged by the Christian to be the essential implication of the operation of Christ's spirit in him; and so, likewise, of all the other attributes of the divine Son. Those who are already aroused alone can appreciate this. "The man seeking God sees in Christ the miraculous fact of his personal life actual in history." The hist-

[1] Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 62, 63, 64.

orical Christ, as apprehended by the Christian — by the man whom he has apprehended, as the old theology said — is the only Son of God, the only instrument of God's will, the only founder of the kingdom of God. These doctrines our moral judgment, once excited, compels us to accept, and so morality passes over into religion, and, at the same time, provides a sphere wherein science and criticism, metaphysic and mysticism, are incapable equally of constructive or destructive results. For, from the irresistible moral impression of Christ's person, which is the norm, man goes on to fill out his work and his attributes in an inviolable realm and after an incontrovertible manner.

Plainly, then, the old view of the cardinal tenets of the Christian faith must be revised. The atonement, for example, is no longer to be regarded as a legal satisfaction offered in full on behalf of mankind. Christ's suffering to death rather forms part of the witness to his faithfulness. To do the will of God he accepted this trial, and its very magnitude testifies to the perfection of his revelation. And if these pangs were but "an accidental accompaniment of his positive

faithfulness in the calling that had been appointed to him,"[1] it is easy to see that no great stress need be laid on such similar details as the miraculous birth, the mystic baptism, the transfiguration, or the resurrection.[2] Having, by a judgment of value, recognized that Christ is God, the really important matter is to pass on to the understanding of all that he accomplished for the manifestation of the divine nature in its relation to men.

Now, Christ's chief mission was the revelation and establishment of the kingdom of God. "In the volitional activity that was peculiar to Christ, the essential will of God as love was made manifest or revealed, in that the kingdom of God, which was Christ's final purpose, is identical with the final purpose of God."[3] In relation to this work all Christ's other attributes gradually make themselves apparent to the eye of faith. For "spiritual activity alone constitutes the reality of a moral personality."[4] Man knows

[1] *Rechtfertigung und V.*, vol. iii. p. 416.

[2] Cf. Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte*, vol. i. pp. 74, *seq.*; Wendt's *Die Lehre Jesu*, vol. ii. p. 543.

[3] *Rechtfertigung und V.*, vol. iii. p. 421.

[4] Ritschl, *Theol. und Meta.*, p. 30.

nothing of a pre-existent or exalted Christ, but only of the temporal career of the Son of God. And this career is divine because it, and nothing but it, set forth the loving nature of God, and the outpouring of his purpose in the organization of the kingdom. The true Christian life cannot be realized except in effort on behalf of this society, and so moral judgment is transformed into religious worship. Recognition of Christ necessarily issues in this devotion of self to his ends. The desire is to achieve the kingdom now, because the motive force presented by the special revelation of Christ cannot find outlet save in resolve to work for an invisible spiritual community. In pursuing this aim, man gains a mastery over nature, because he recognizes his own unity, in love, with the deity whose realm he serves, and thus he is redeemed. For redemption is not a mystical process wrought out in the sinner by Christ. There is no original sin to be removed, but rather an ignorance of the import of God's nature and of Christ's mission. When these have been fully appreciated, man redeems himself by an inner act of the religious consciousness that results in

his self-identification with the divine ends revealed by our Lord. Sin is a subjective experience precipitating recognition of failure to conform to God's will. The revelation of Christ, in the shape of the kingdom of God, provides a means whereby sin may be actively overcome, and peace made, not with a Judge, but with a loving Father in heaven, who desires that the ends of his children should be identical with his own. These are the positive channels for the realization of the living conviction which Harnack, during the controversy on the Apostles Creed, summarized as follows: "The question who and what Jesus is, when the Church tradition concerning him is shaken at any point, can be settled only in the way and with the means of historical investigation; but the conviction that this historical Jesus is the Redeemer and Lord follows, not from historical knowledge, but from the knowledge of sin and of God when Jesus Christ is announced to it."

III. *Criticism of the Ritschlian Presuppositions.*

No matter how deep and fundamental our disagreement with the Ritschlian doctrines may be, they are facts meriting attention. Many able men adhere to them, many others find a refuge in them. Or, to be brief, they are possessed of significance and authority. In the first place, there seems to be little doubt that the Ritschlian theology has met a certain need. Agnostic, it yet shows a path round agnosticism; empirical, it yet supplies a defence against empiricism; historical in method, it nevertheless refuses the evidence of history; socialistic, it yet furnishes the individual with a species of mission; rationalistic, it nevertheless is supremely fiducial. Little wonder, then, that many, smitten by the varied ailments of modern culture, should fly to it, and find satisfaction for the religious instinct uncrossed by any conflict with history or criticism, with the sciences or with metaphysic. The specific advantages are but particular cases of these. For, once more, the Ritschlian insistence upon the Jewish element in Christianity and upon the Hebrew ideals

which Christ fulfilled, has a certain timeliness — it chimes in with the higher criticism. This, even although the tendency be to see a breach of ordinary historical development in the apparition of Christ. For, notwithstanding the embargo laid upon inquiry into God's moral government of the universe, Judaistic conceptions, rather than Hellenic, are taken as the tests of New Testament trustworthiness. No doubt these notions have been purified by a recent view of the ideals immanent in Judaism. The fact remains that the direction in which Ritschl points is the quarter where an important truth lies.

Further, the doctrine of the kingdom of God bears many fruitful lessons. "The precious idea of the kingdom of God is not a dream of the imagination, an illusion; it is a divine force; it reveals itself in the Church, it seizes hold upon us, it penetrates us, it gives the will a decisive impulse towards the most elevated ideal, towards eternal life."[1] In this organism man can find rest in activity, self-realization in social effort, salvation for himself with others, a visible crown of Christ's

[1] Thikötter, *Darstellung der Theol. A. Ritschls*, p. 58.

work in an invisible community whereto all Christians belong. Yet again, the unique kind of Christ's mission receives recognition. His spirit is a source of authoritative impressions in every age. It seems to furnish the one positive fact to which, be social and intellectual changes what they may, sinful man can cling in full assurance of safety. The affectionate warmth that inspires the Ritschlian teaching on this point, the religious halo that surrounds the shadowy figure of the Master, the enthusiasm with which his origination and realization of the kingdom of God are treated, — all these serve to attract and to generate new hope in an era sick of speculation, barren in belief, and doubtful of itself in all spheres. Finally, the implied protest against intellectualism pleases many, who feel their own mental shortcomings, and flatters more, who have neither the desire nor the leisure to reflect on religion. The evidences of Christianity appear to be brought back once again to the level of the average man. "That ideals exist which authoritatively appeal to the instincts of the human soul; that these ideals were, historically, in their fulness introduced by Jesus Christ;

that he claimed to be the channel through whom God could permanently speak to the world, and act upon it in grace; that, in point of fact, it is through faith in Christ, and in the God of Christ, that men are led to the fulfilment of the human ideal, — such are the evidences of Christianity. They afford no complete logical proof. God did not mean that they should. Intellectual proof would fall outside the region of the spirit and of conscience."[1] For these reasons, among others, the adaptability of Ritschlianism and its exaltation of Christ have appealed to men of widely differing endowments. Clamant questions have, in some instances, been stayed for the moment. Whether the demands themselves were altogether reasonable, and whether satisfaction thus achieved can prove altogether final, are other questions, both of which I should incline to answer strongly in the negative.

The plain fact is that the Ritschlian position does not stand critical examination. No doubt its imposing outlines and its systematic plan might easily lead one to judge

[1] Robert Mackintosh, *Essays towards a New Theology*, p. 99.

otherwise. Nevertheless, the foundation is essentially insecure. To begin with, the principle of construction bears many traces of being no more than a reaction against prevalent ideas. The theory might be termed both eclectic and non-eclectic. But, although piecing together bits culled from his predecessors, Ritschl was led to do so by his antagonism to certain contemporary tendencies. Absolute Idealism had been far too confident, and had, as he believed, proved a great failure in theology, while blank materialism was in much the same case. The act of knowledge that referred ultimate reality to spirit, like that which referred it to matter, stood self-condemned. And, by an extreme reaction, the method proposed was to bring knowledge to its senses, as it were, by showing that it could not know anything ultimately. It had too long been a mischievous disturber of the peace, too long an arrant impostor, and needed incarceration. Theories, whether psychic or materialistic, had professed to explain everything. So, by a common enough swing of the pendulum, the new theory was to be fundamentally incapable of explaining any-

thing. Ritschl does not differ from Hegel on the importance of religion, but he holds, contrary to his *quondam* guide, that the objects of religion lie beyond the range of human knowledge. So, to castigate an arrogant intellectualism and yet retain a spiritual universe, the separation between philosophy and theology was proposed.

On this arrangement, theology is to have a sphere peculiar to itself and above knowledge, while metaphysic is to be content with the illusions of knowledge. This reminds one of the family tree said to have belonged to an ancient Irish house. The document covered several large sheets of parchment, and conspicuously lettered about the middle of the third was the striking annotation, "About this time the world was created." The independence of theology is analogous to that of the remoter scions of this sept. The objects discussed by theology and by metaphysics are to all intents identical. Both by their very nature concern themselves with the Absolute and its implications. The Ritschlian value-judgments, if not pure inventions by isolated individuals, depend upon judgments of reality. It is impossible

to frame even an elementary conception of a theological object, not to mention a system, wholly without reference to its existence. It must, at least, be an object of thought. But thought has been condemned already, and man finds himself in the extraordinary position of being able, by means of sentiment, to attach absolute value to things from which his thinking is debarred. This is no mere subjective idealism, in which experience fashions itself "within" and leaves "without" well alone. On the contrary, man's inner nature has been riven asunder. In the interest of some vaguely defined faculty, negatively known to us as different from thought, thought has been snubbed. The *impasse* thus reached may be overcome, but only in one of two ways. Either absolute scepticism must ensue, wherein experience is clearly seen to yield no valid conclusions; or an equally absolute dogmatism, wherein thought, having swallowed the snub, retires, so to speak, leaving this unknowable, yet confident, sentiment, or faith, or elaborative feeling, or whatever it may be, at liberty to pursue its peculiar vagaries. The former alternative is self-contradictory; the latter

is merely absurd. The Ritschlian procedure is illogical, because it accepts neither, supposing that somehow experience may be divided into hermetically sealed compartments. From Monday to Saturday, knowledge dances among its phenomena, which it knows are not knowledge; on Sunday, the other power moons among its realities, which cannot fail to impress it, but which may or may not exist. The knower of the lawful days doubts and cannot dream; the dreamer of the sabbath believes, and can never know. There is no possible appeal from Philip sober to Philip drunk. For this classical gentleman is now so constituted that he cannot but be always drunk and always sober at one and the same time. When he meets a policeman, he knows, because the officer is a phenomenon; when he sees the originals of the gargoyle, he is impressed, — they are among the mighty mayhaps. And the curious thing is that the policeman and the devils may be present together, but never to the same psychological power. Philip can think the one; the others he can feel, or accept, or something equally vague, but can by no means think. This is a late

form of a very old fallacy, namely, that experiences are possible into which the element of thought, of mental recognition, does not enter. Now, while it is true that certain intuitions may be difficult to explain, they would never be known to us unless they were known. The element now of feeling, anon of will, may indeed predominate here or there. Yet the element of thought cannot be cast out. In the same way, thought cannot evict the other elements. Even a psychological description,[1] which the Ritschlian view seems in some respects to favor, is in essentials a testimony to the ubiquity of the metaphysical faculty. And it is among the most curious delusions of modern culture that mysticism can be evaporated by the intervention of indefinable perceptions which never rise to the level of thought, or rather are supposed to remain always above it. The very statement that the perception occurs is itself an abstraction from thought. Condemn the one, and you condemn the other. Experience is not so unlike Hudibras' horse.

[1] Cf. G. Vorbrodt, *Psychologie in Theologie u. Kirche,* and *Psychologie des Glaubens.*

> "For Hudibras wore but one spur,
> As wisely knowing, could he stir
> To active trot one side of 's horse,
> The other would not hang on worse."

To be able even to say that metaphysic has one sphere and theology another, it is necessary to *know* something of the larger area from which both are carved. There is no possible co-operation in human experience between an isolated knowledge and an equally isolated faith. If they could be supposed to run along parallel lines, they would only confuse or, as is most probable, condemn each other; indeed, neither could have any other office.

The Ritschlian doctrines furnish an excellent object-lesson enforcing this conclusion. God impresses man overwhelmingly, and Christ is God's revelation enforcing this impression. But we are forbidden to ask *why* God thus strikes home, or *how* his revelation is a possibility. With what result? Deity is at once reduced to the level of a mere means in the human career. Man earnestly desires to free himself from the world. The *conception* of God aids him to realize this desire. He perceives that

deity can help to liberate him, and deity is adopted, not as such, but as a useful stepping-stone. He may be cast aside when the end has been brought within measurable realization. Such a god is no more God than any similar helping idea. Nay, further, on the Ritschlian principles, he is not even a source of power. For the assumption is that nothing is known of him; there is no attachment of reality, yet he is treated for the moment as if he were real. Thought knows him not, yet faith perceives that he is of value as a notion analyzed out of experience. Metaphysic supplies nothing real, yet a metaphysical object is endued with the highest value in relation to what the individual does know — the progressive whole of his own life. A contingent universal, if such a phrase be permissible, suddenly comes to receive authority over all. The theory is so self-contradictory as to be practically incapable of definite statement. Thus theology, so far from being vindicated, actually becomes impossible. In extruding apologetics, the Ritschlians unwittingly turn themselves out of house and home. For, if God be a bare limiting conception, of whose reality

nothing is known; if Christ be a man in whom this conception was uniquely vivid; if the historical evidence of the Biblical books be immaterial; and if all religious ideas be but striking feelings asseverated by this or that person, how is a science of Christianity possible? Personal religion affords no sufficient basis for a theology, yet no other is offered. The universe is not God's; it is but man's representation. Faith is flouted in the very delineation of the manner in which alone it is held capable of justification. Man is asked to *believe* in a God and a Christ, after his belief in the being of the one and in the historically divine nature of the other has been laughed to scorn. What need to say that "if the religious consciousness hold that for truth which is not truth-in-itself, it is the prey of a delusion"? Even the attenuated christian truth of the Ritschlians, with its eviscerated Christ, its pliant view of sin, its comfortable deity, and its secluding agnosticism, cannot maintain itself. As has been well said, "We cannot shirk the intricate further problems of Christianity. If the thing could be done; if Christian mankind could speculate as far

as Ritschl does, and then desist from speculation at his word of command — Ritschl's theology might, I conceive, be a Christian theology. He does not refuse tribute to Christ, but argues that the question of offering this special personal tribute of worship to Christ does not legitimately arise. Such a thinker is a Christian *manqué*."[1] To answer the supreme question of Christian theology — Who is the person who redeems the world? — we must know the terms of the process. What is redemption? what is the world to be redeemed? who is the redeemer? and how is he able to save?

[1] Mackintosh, *Essays towards a New Theology*, p. 141.

THE THEISTIC PROBLEM.

I. *Philosophy and Theological Problems, especially Theism.*

Theology is a standing witness to the need which man inevitably feels of finding a harmony between the complex elements of his experience. A philosophical construction of the world will always remain a desideratum for such a being. This is the link that brings religion into connection with speculative theory. If there is to be any rational unity, the two cannot but react on one another. In the past, as the Ritschlians argue, Greek philosophy may have led Christian theology astray. But it is absurd to suppose that the single method of expelling this error is to throw all philosophy over. The question rather is, — Can theology, accepting the metaphysical first principles which spiritual inquiry of necessity involves, so react upon philosophy as to produce a less inadequate solution of difficulties? Does the fact of sin,

for example, enable the theologian to help the philosopher to a fuller understanding of the divine nature? The latter approaches deity cosmologically, as it were; the former, anthropologically. Does the organic interconnection of the two accounts lead further towards truth? Assuredly. For "at the beginning of all greater religious movements, we are in presence of the Absolute in its creative power; and the ultimate cause lies beyond the range of historical inquiry."[1] Yet, as theology points out, man is the medium of this creative power, and so a specific direction is given to the extra-historical speculation. In return for the critical service rendered by metaphysic, theology can throw a flood of light on several dark places. There are three regions, at least, where, amid contemporary controversies, theology proper could both assist and correct philosophical speculation. The questions of the personality of God, of the creative or originating power which marks the divinity of Christ, and of the relation of man to sin, and through this to universal evil, press heavy at the present juncture. In

[1] Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age*, vol. i. p. 6 (Engl. trans.).

connection with the first it is valuable to emphasize the religious apprehension of God, with its implication of personality, in order that the problem may be viewed from another side than that of intellect, with its condemnation of personality as a phenomenon of the finite. As respects the second, theology calls attention to the important truth that the value of Christianity does not lie in its affinity for natural religion, but far rather in its distinctive extension of all natural religion, so called. Prior to Christ, more or less mutilated ideals had been operative. But when, to a metaphysical view of the nature of the universe and of man's experience, there was added what the divinity of Christ brought — the origination and practical embodiment of the highest moral ideal — then God's nature was known in its essential implications. Thirdly, the doctrine of the Incarnation provides a clue for the treatment of the problem of evil. The world and the things thereof are to be employed, not cast aside as hindrances. Because they exist, and because man relates himself to them constantly, they must be capable of subserving moral purposes, of leading to religious ends.

The state of inquiry now precludes us from arriving at any other result. To-day theology is more closely connected with philosophy than ever. Both attack the same problems, although they do not seek for solutions of identical sweep. And, at the present time, when speculative theory would do well to reconsider the theistic and the christological questions, a reverent and thorough theology could furnish well-nigh incalculable assistance. It would be in a position to insist upon full consideration of some very perplexing problems which metaphysic, its interests being more secular, might perhaps tend to dismiss too lightly. For the moment it may seem, to abstract thinkers and theologians alike, that systematic presentation of the being of deity and of his revelation is at a discount. But the latter and, as I earnestly believe, the former, have only to remain faithful to their science. It deals in

"Those thoughts that wander through eternity,"

and so must be the subject of constantly renewed interest from age to age, of an interest to which man gives himself up, because he is always trying, however feebly,

to read what is deepest, truest, most subtle, yet most enthralling, in his own complex nature.

Of the various problems to which reference has just been made, the Theistic is at once the most fundamental and the most easily brought into relation with the competing views — the Gnosticism and Agnosticism — peculiar to the Speculative and Ritschlian schools. It may be of interest, accordingly, to direct attention to it, in conclusion, for the special purpose of gathering up the threads of our inquiry and of arriving, if possible, at some ground from which further advance may be undertaken.

In one of those prose notes, so frequently as pregnant with intimation as the poems themselves, Goethe has pointed out that ages wherein faith predominates prove hearty and inspiring, not only for their own representatives, but also for succeeding generations. On the other hand, epochs in which scepticism achieves its "miserable victory," no matter how brilliant for the moment, are destined to vanish from the sight of posterity, because no one troubles to consider what is fruitless. Doubtless, periods may be divided

conveniently into fiducial and unbelieving, for now the one inclination holds the mastery, now the other. This classification, nevertheless, takes little note of times wherein the two elements co-exist with approximately equal influence, or of years, like our own, when controversy is beginning to turn, not so much on faith and unfaith, as on the kind of the object to which faith may be directed. In much contemporary speculation of an apparently destructive character there is a solid substratum of belief. The agnostic adopts his necessary assumptions in the same way as the theist; and the question is gradually reducing itself to this, What *can* man believe? While in a corresponding degree, it is slowly receding from the old choice between such mutually exclusive conceptions as God, the Absolute, the Ultimate, and no-God, no-Absolute, no-Ultimate. In other words, faith of some sort exercises sway, even although this fact be obscured from many by the resounding conflict concerning its object, content, nature.

We stumble upon the diffused conception of the ultimate unity of phenomena in nearly all departments of special investigation.

One might legitimately regard the notion as a commonplace, a platitude, which philosophers, theologians, social reformers, and men of science agree to adopt. There can be little doubt that, in past epochs of thought, similar ideas have performed an analogous function. Formative principles, upheld to a greater or lesser extent by every member of the select company that toils for the "spiritually indispensable," can be disengaged without difficulty from the complex record of history. But, at the present time, the conviction of the substantial unity of the universe affects the average man as well as the professed investigator. The doctrine continually peeps out in newspapers, in magazines, and even in novels. These form the literary food of the "public." Accordingly, ignorance cannot be pleaded, nor, indeed, is there any important tendency towards this subterfuge. So far as his opportunity allows, the "man in the street" re-echoes the faith of the student, of the experimenter, of the political reformer. It matters nothing that the echo must frequently be even cruder than the voice. He too has his belief in "something" that underlies everything. As might

be anticipated, his ideas regarding the nature of this ultimate power are generally vague. At all events, no consensus of view can be gathered from the masses. Here theologians have been prone to mislead themselves, when they have urged that a precise idea of God is a necessary postulate of the common sense of mankind. As a matter of fact, the ordinary consciousness usually adopts one of three attitudes towards the question.

In the first place, many influences — which need no mention now — combine to persuade the wage-earner, the clerk, and the capitalist that life centres in the present. How many, for instance, dwell upon death, even although they know its permanent contingency and final surety. For some the provision of to-morrow's bread, for others the abounding comforts of to-day burk the problems which, with a grim irony, surround man's "single certainty." So, by an identical process, God comes to be regarded as a far-off being, or, at least, as one whose nature and designs do not visibly affect temporal events. In these cases, the question of ultimate unity either fails to occur, or, having entered into the field of recognition, is thrust aside with con-

scious repugnance or with half-conscious indifference. From such no direct aid can be derived, however valuable they may prove, on an occasion, as object-lessons.

But, secondly, large numbers escape the pressure of the leading modern idea by identifying the unity, now so freely attested, with the name, God. For them this term has a fluctuating signification, although the limits of wavering are commonly clear enough. From parents or teachers belief in what is called "God" has been derived. And this undefined, and often self-contradictory, notion seems to stay any very fundamental doubts. The "faith once delivered" maintains its authority, not, perhaps, altogether unchanged or intact, yet as a sufficient working basis. Put it to the question, and you will receive replies. Mayhap an attack upon the questioner, or upon some lay figure meant to represent him; mayhap a series of considerations which are characteristic mainly because they tend to cancel one another; mayhap a simple affirmation that God is over all his works. Here, once more, the average man throws little light upon the object of his beliefs, except indeed in the

limitations that he usually imposes on his anthropomorphism.

In the third place, however, we discover a smaller class composed partly of those whose "state" is deeply interesting, and partly of those whose arrogance — and ignorance — repel. Many are passing through the vale of honest doubt, finding small help, yet once and again obtaining a veritable revelation, possibly from such a writer as Browning. Not a few, on the contrary, taking a restricted view of the outlook, readily assert that the Bible is a well constructed "fraud," or, when their condemnation broadens, openly declare themselves atheists. For such conclusions all alike prove themselves unable to offer reasons fit to stand the fire of criticism; although, it is to be remembered that the honest doubter frequently comes to be no longer in any proper sense representative of the average man. But, for the rest, either certain destructive tendencies of modern thought have been misunderstood, or have been made to bear the burden of unwarrantable deductions. In short, the partial return to a standpoint not widely different from that of

the *Aufklärung* often turns out to be only the most prominent feature of "half-culture." The self-styled atheist is not seldom in the most literal acceptation a fool (I happen to have a case in my mind's eye), or a dabbler who has not won the right to such freedom of speech. Thus, although the average man of the day ponders these things in his heart to a greater extent than many of his predecessors, it can hardly be said that the results he reaches are, as yet, helpful. Nor can one blame him for this. Whether he be indifferent, or quasi-orthodox, or consciously negative, the leaders on whom he must perforce rely, have scarcely happened upon the primary conditions of a gospel, — agreement among themselves and contagious confidence in the teaching they have to impart. What messages, then, do they bear?

II. *Agnosticism and the Theistic Problem.*

As has been indicated already, two main competing theories occupy the field. The majority of the more prominent thinkers affiliate themselves either to Agnosticism or to a specialized kind of Gnosticism. Moreover,

these theories, regarded as semi-philosophical, semi-theological, speculations may be alleged to exhaust the formative influences of the time even more completely than they enlist the notable leaders of thought. Nevertheless, signs multiply to intimate that a new movement is at last in progress, a tendency dominated neither by the fascinating seclusion of the "Unknowable," nor by the inspiring ubiquity of the "Eternal Consciousness."

In what follows it is proposed to notice the Agnostic and Gnostic positions successively, and then, from a somewhat different outlook, to attempt some constructive suggestions regarding the Theistic problem. On the whole, and from the very nature of the case, nothing is to be expected from Agnosticism. But it is useful to attempt an estimate of the positive contribution made by Hegel and by those who repeat him.

The Agnostic account of deity seems latterly to have assumed two principal shapes. As it is possible to divide experience into the dual constitutive elements of the self and the not-self, so, in presenting a rational scheme of the universe, one can emphasize either factor. The twin Agnos-

ticisms, Transfigured Realism and Critical Idealism, go hand in hand for a while, only, however, to part company when pressed by the need for *positive* results. They agree to enforce an absolute contrast between the phenomenal or apparent and the noumenal or real. All that man knows stands condemned already by the very fact of his knowledge. This wholesale censure arises from the application of a test which, curiously enough, is not, and cannot be, known. Knowledge finds itself in the disconcerting yet irremediable position of being abased before Not-knowledge. Once more, each of the Agnosticisms, according to a method of its own, opens out a wide cleavage between the self and the not-self. The thinker and the object of thought are, as one must infer, in the habit of making their appearance under spatial relations and restrictions, similar in essential respects to those governing the comparative contiguity of any two "external" things. At this point, no matter how reached, the common path ends. For, evidently, the conclusions — mutual so far — are such that it has become possible either to "transfigure" the not-self or to "criticise"

the self. Indeed, a further advance can scarcely be compassed until a decision, involving one choice or the other, have been taken. If the self and the not-self be thus completely at odds, the plain course is to drop one, and in the issue to read it afresh, not for itself, but according to the demands that assemble themselves during treatment of the factor selected for fundamental analysis. In both cases a theory of the universe emerges, and with it a pronouncement on deity.

(*a.*) Transfigured Realism, as the name implies, seizes upon the empirical or *a posteriori* element in experience, and to all intents and purposes explains the *ego* as if it were identical in ultimate nature with the *non-ego*. No doubt, something speciously like separate and independent consideration is apparently accorded to each; as, for example, when both are viewed as parallel, yet mutually inconvertible, phenomena; or are dignified, for the sake of accuracy or argument, by the presentation of an algebraic symbol (x, y) dedicated to exclusive individual use. But, even at this, severance leads in the end merely to the practical annulment of one factor. Self must be con-

sidered as fundamentally phenomenal as not-self. That is to say, the former sinks into the latter as respects ultimate questions. The primary grounding of the subject comes to be identical with that of the object. Phenomenally the two may differ; but the stress of the nature of the not-self forces the conclusion that both actually proceed from the same power. The theory of deity explicitly embodies a doctrine of this species. Nay, one might go so far as to allege that, but for a confusion of self and not-self, the Unknowable might never have been dragged from its natural limbo of obscurity, it would certainly never have been honored with an initial capital.

By a process of reasoning based on an inspection of the contents of experience as if they were in sum *a posteriori*, as if they belonged to the realm of the not-self, deity *quâ* "Power" is reached. This furnishes the substantial identity in being (reality) whence difference happens to have manifested itself now in phenomenal becoming. This in any case, can be gleaned from Mr. Herbert Spencer's declarations; although, otherwise, one may take heart of great daring and say

that it is more than difficult to attach any precise import to them. "Common Sense asserts the existence of a reality; Objective Science proves that this reality cannot be what we think it; Subjective Science shows why we cannot think of it as it is, and yet are compelled to think of it as existing; and in this assertion of a Reality, utterly inscrutable in nature, Religion finds an assertion essentially coinciding with her own. We are obliged to regard every phenomenon as a manifestation of some Power by which we are acted upon, though Omnipresence is unthinkable, yet, as experience discloses no bounds to the diffusion of phenomena, we are unable to think of limits to the presence of this Power, while the criticisms of Science teach us that this Power is incomprehensible. And this consciousness of an Incomprehensible Power, called Omnipresent from inability to assign its limits, is just that consciousness on which Religion dwells."[1] Once more: "Thus the consciousness of an Inscrutable Power manifested to us through all phenomena has been growing ever clearer, and must eventually be freed from its imper-

[1] *First Principles* (fourth ed.), p. 99.

fections. The certainty that on the one hand such a Power exists, while on the other hand its nature transcends intuition and is beyond imagination, is the certainty towards which intelligence has from the first been progressing. To this conclusion Science inevitably arrives as it reaches its confines; while to this conclusion Religion is irresistibly driven by criticism. And satisfying as it does the demands of the most rigorous logic at the same time that it gives the religious sentiment the widest possible sphere of action, it is the conclusion we are bound to accept without reserve or qualification."[1] When we inquire what precisely Mr. Spencer intends to convey here, several problems at once arise, and this despite the apparent simplicity of the passages cited. For instance; Are the phenomena in which this "Power" *manifests* itself wholly distinct from it? Can we fairly apply the spatial relation, or irrelation, between subject and object to the Ultimate and its diffused omnipresences? Again, how does the consciousness of this Power — about which there is such finality — stand towards the Power itself? Have we

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

any valid reason for believing that, in an experience such as man's, the two can be rationally distinguished? Confined as he is to consciousness, can man figure this Power to himself as outside the limits — if here there be limitation in the ordinary sense — of consciousness? Mr. Spencer intends that questions of this kind should be answered in the negative. The trend of his reasoning is exclusively in this direction. But an unequivocal "no," so far as one can infer, either eviscerates the declarations of all thinkable meaning whatsoever, or, if not, depends for significance upon an unacknowledged, or unperceived, equivocation. This equivocation, further, involves the very confusion between self and not-self that the assertion of their parallelism and consequent separation seems to exclude completely.

The Unknowable, which is deity, must be *un*known; that is, the negation of the known. If so, it ceases to occupy any significant place in experience. For, divested of all relations in thought, and stripped of every connection with the thinker, it disappears in the limitless *Ewigkeit*. Thus, a being constituted like man has no resource but to

embrace atheism. If not, then, somehow or other, the Unknowable makes entrance into experience; it *is*, as we are informed, an operative conception. But, by hypothesis, phenomena exhaust the entire range of human knowledge. Therefore, the Unknowable must be a phenomenon, and so God becomes emptied of reality. The Unknowable is either nothing or something. If the former, as Mr. Spencer's predominating *theory* renders it, then deity vanishes. If the latter, as Mr. Spencer's prevailing *tendency* represents it, then *some phenomenon* gains added dignity, which, however, cannot amount to reality; or, as is the more natural interpretation, deity loses itself amid phenomena. The choice, accordingly, lies between a "transfigured" Atheism and a "transfigured" Materialism.

The possibility of transferring deity into a sphere labelled "Unknowable," like the contemplated value of the transference, depends upon a want of discrimination between the self and the not-self. For, let it be granted that there is an "Inscrutable Power *manifested to us* through all phenomena," and it follows either that the power is a common

element in our conscious states, and therefore neither necessarily inscrutable nor necessarily divine; or that it is a "something," exactly like Locke's Substance, which *we* superadd to our representations of what we call the "external." The language usually employed by agnostics would induce us to adopt the former alternative,—a "transfigured" Materialism. The doctrine evidently contemplated by them, nevertheless, points to the latter alternative, — "transfigured" Atheism. In the one case, God becomes a phenomenon, a phenomenon possessed, no doubt, of a special character that operates so as to enable man to determine the similarity of successive conditions in consciousness, but a phenomenon still. In the other case, God is the name applied to a merely gratuitous invention which is *in* consciousness, because a consciousness produces it, but which as such, in result, is quite beyond consciousness, and therefore never can be *any* thing, always must remain nothing. The analysis has, in short, failed to rid itself of several fundamental confusions, and, as a consequence, the synthesis, the "reconciliation," leaves the problem of deity as much a problem as before. It has

a value, however, in so far as "the glorious uncertainty of it" may be regarded as of "more use than the justice of it." The stimulus administered is admirable.

(*b.*) Critical Idealism, particularly in the theological *nuance* of it, affords a strange specimen of hybridity. But enough has already been said of it to warrant briefest consideration now. This view imparts even less confidence than Mr. Spencer's. It is far more insidious, more fundamentally fatal in its effects. Experience, as we have seen, is rent asunder, to the private advantage of some vaguely adumbrated faculty negatively "defined" as "different from thought." Instead of escaping the theistic problem, we only light upon another instance of the very old fallacy, that experiential states are possible from which the element of mental recognition has been entirely expelled. And, if the problem be faced with this equipment, one must either suspend judgment in perfect, and therefore self-contradictory, scepticism, or delegate the solution to a capacity unrecognizable by thought; that is, to one that can have no existence for us. To say that God affects the inner man with

irresistible power, and at the same time to deny man the right to inquire *what* God is, or *why* or *how* he operates, is to reduce actual deity to the level of a mere supposition of the moral consciousness. The theistic problem, so far from being solved, has not even revealed its terms. The proffered answer has all the defects of Agnosticism together with a doubled set of difficulties. God, to be God, must include truth and reality in himself. But this bare "limiting conception," as we are explicitly told, possesses no reality. It also lacks the content necessary to truth. With only too sufficient completeness, condemnation of thought balks rehabilitation of faith.

III. *The Principle of Rationality.*

In the Agnostic teaching of the Ritschlian theologians, as we have seen, a main factor must unquestionably be sought in the work of Kant and of the metaphysicians who, with due allowance for individual differences, may be regarded as his pupils. On the other side stands the ubiquitous power of the positive sciences. Those who know not Kant usually

pass him by because they study nature; those who choose to know him only in part select such of his doctrines as seem to tally with the irrelatedness of mind and matter. When scientific nomenclature, which none can escape, does not hedge every prospect in, an amalgam of half-critical idealism and uncritical realism emerges; or, perhaps, Hume's *reductio ad absurdum* of sensationalism might as well never have been promulgated; or, yet again, a new scholasticism, more terrible than its prototype only in jargon, takes the place of rational philosophy. But, in all cases equally, the principal influence is that of Kant, or of the scientific movement, or of a suspicious mixture of the two. It may therefore be well to look at both of these factors for a little, in order to set conclusions in perspective — relatively at least.

It is often said that ordinary experience, the information of the fabled "man in the street," is unorganized knowledge. In contrast to this, science may be called partially organized knowledge, while as compared with both, philosophy may be termed completely organized knowledge. No doubt, such statements embody a certain truth, but

they cannot be taken absolutely. For, to be plain, no knowledge would be worthy of the name were it unorganized. The day-laborer would be unable to take his meals, such as they are, were his experience unorganized — void of principles. So too the mathematician, the physicist, the chemist, the botanist, the biologist would fall into many errors now avoided were their knowledge partially organized only. The truth seems to be that for all men equally the question is, not so much one of greater or lesser organization, but rather of more or less adequate consciousness of all that organization implies. The day-laborer assumes more than the scientific man. He takes for granted, not merely his knowledge of bread and bacon, but also the nature of bread and bacon in themselves. For the most part, the devotees of science do nothing to eliminate the former assumption, but their life-work implies the rejection of the latter. Knowledge or experience, in other words, whether it be characteristically that of peasant or philistine, of astronomer or physiologist, of metaphysician or moral philosopher, differs in degree, never in kind. As a whole, it presupposes the same unifying

principles in every case. The ordinary consciousness never need appreciate this; the scientific consciousness busies itself with a portion of its truth; the philosophical consciousness has no other office than to state the fact clearly and show what it implies. Science may boast itself that the empire of *outer* experience is one on which the sun never sets; philosophy, being anxious about the implications of empire, would probably reply, "Yea, verily, but also one in which the tax-gatherer never sleeps."

If, then, it be a misnomer to speak of different kinds of experience, the contrasts of outlook, so familiar to all, must be explained otherwise. The scientific movement is so far like ordinary irreflective knowledge that it attempts to treat experience as if it were composed of sections. Ere science is possible, it appears that certain assumptions require to be made. These can be stated very succinctly. It is held that experience has an "outside" and an "inside." Science deals with the former alone. For the successful, or undisturbed, pursuit of empirical investigation, certain presuppositions would seem to be indispensable. For

example. There is an "external" world, which exists and goes on the even tenor of its way apart from the action and influence of mind, perhaps even despite them. Nevertheless — for such is a condition of knowledge — mind, in some mysterious manner, comes to grasp this foreign order, and finds itself in possession of a power whereby it is enabled to reflect upon its own great opposite. This is not to be taken as implying the superiority of mind. For of this, science, by its very nature, can say nothing. It is no more than a statement that the "inside" of experience has a faculty of comprehending the "outside." This must be so, otherwise science would not exist, and science *is*. But, even with these sufficiently liberal asseverations, it is impossible to rest content. Mind does not stand possessed of mere existential knowledge concerning this external sphere. Ere science can take a single step, the judgment of existence must be elaborated modally. Mind is aware that this "outer" reality subsists, or persists, in certain ways. For instance, the manifestation of an unaltering force makes itself apparent. For, were this removed, many of the most

fundamental data of science would disappear. Above all, it is necessary that mind should perceive the uniformity of "reality." Things are such and such things, because they find setting in a series. But were the series continually changing, were it capable of indefinite rearrangement, the science of to-day would become the mythology of to-morrow. Accordingly, mind must apprehend the world as a scheme governed by uniform sequence. On these conditions, and on them alone, can science stake off a kingdom within the borders of which investigation may be pursued without fear of disturbance. Further, granted these conditions, science proceeds to christen its kingdom Reality, as opposed to the subjectivity of the "inner" mind, which is not to be viewed as real, at least in the same sense. For all its talk about Certainty and the like, science finds it necessary to presuppose a Gilbertian world — one in which the presence and activity of the principle of reality in thought must be denied, yet one in which the results of thinking are unique, because only to them can value and validity be ascribed.[1]

[1] Cf. H. Jones, *The Philosophy of Lotze*, p. 81.

Many, who can hardly be termed unbiassed, would curtly dismiss science on account of the assumptions which it finds itself compelled to make. But they fail to perceive that their own thought is in still more perilous case. So long as science keeps to its last, its necessary presuppositions must be granted. Were it inevitable that the so-called "natural philosopher" should, as a prelude to his physics, furnish forth a theory of the universe and of experience, — heat, light, electricity, and magnetism would have to bide long ere their turn for attention arrived. The glory of science lies partly in the very data which it chooses to adopt, and for the rest, in the results that it has attained and is attaining, but which, in the absence of the general principles just indicated, would never have been gleaned. Scientific faith, scientific imagination, and the like, are no pleasing fictions of the empiricist in his moments of unbending. To his theory they are bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh. Without them it would not have been. And so long as this is borne in mind one can find no fault. Rather, indeed, the reverse; for science ceases to be science, and

becomes either clumsy poetry or bad metaphysics, when it forgets its own province. The observer who sweeps the heavens and finds no God, the true sceptic for whom God is an unnecessary hypothesis, the biologist who avers that he has been able to make some few judgments without logic, are one and all justified, if they continually call to remembrance the definite extent of the range in which they have deliberately chosen to toil. By dividing they conquer; but they are not thereby gifted with a right to suppose that the division was never made. Science scores its most startling triumphs by devoting assiduous attention to the "outside" of experience, or to a portion of it. The failures which, as we too often forget at present, need to be placed alongside the successes, are traceable, for the most part, to a desire to repudiate the conditions of the compact, by observance of which the major victories of discovery have been won.

When the partial experience, which science necessarily sets aside for the exercise of its special methods, comes to be treated as if it were the sum-total of the universe, certain sufficiently startling conclusions are not

unlikely to follow. Now this is in great measure the phenomenon that has presented itself to an admiring, a timorous, or an astonished crowd, during the last generation. Hence, too, the Spencerian phenomenalism and the Ritschlian timidity. So mighty had been the victories within the "outer" world, so tangible some of their consequences, that not a few were willing to accept readily the asseveration of the discoverers, "no other world exists." Human experience, having arrived at the strange pass of possessing an outside and an inside, has, even more remarkably, found itself able to acquiesce with the wife — when her husband told her that he would keep the inside of the house while she might have the outside. The empirical theory of *external things* thus came to take its place as the theory of the *universe*, and the delusion was that the same theory could fulfil both functions with equal success. Men came to alarm themselves over the perilous position into which religion, morals, and the other so-called spiritual realities had fallen. And the more loudly it was affirmed that the abstract sphere of science is co-extensive with the universe, the deeper became the

heart-searchings. Signs are not awanting that this phase is now passing away. The misconceptions out of which it originally sprang are being brought to light. Some select spirits begin to perceive that the essential presuppositions of science *are* presuppositions. Nay, a very few candidly confess that they are not to be reproached overmuch for their experiments in metaphysic; for, as they rightly aver, it is impossible to write good metaphysics with a bad pen.[1]

While, then, *positive* inquiry, as Mr. Spencer's and the Ritschlian result are often termed, has thus been progressing by confining itself strictly within a certain range, and has been making considerable drafts on the credulity of the irreflective, by implicitly denying the restriction, philosophical speculation has not been altogether idle. In this century — since Kant, as Mr. Balfour says[2] — one chief victory may be attributed to it. At length it has come to recognize its own proper problem. Thanks to Hume, men do

[1] Romanes used to *say* this sometimes: in his last books he has made his reasons public.

[2] Cf. *The Foundations of Belief*, p. 94.

not require to trouble longer with the unthinkable and unanswerable. He who declares that thought and extension are mutually exclusive, and spends his life in trying to get out from the one to the other, had better go to school with the Scotch sceptic. There he may achieve an insight into the moral of "Humpty Dumpty." Kant in one sense made philosophy possible by asking *the* philosophical question. Experience has neither inside nor outside, it is an organic whole, and the first business of speculation is to set forth the immanent principle of the unity. The abstract view of science gives place to a more concrete, a more adequately real, doctrine. Objects, as the sciences believe, may have a nature of their own, but to possess this, in man's experience at least — and we may presume that this alone is interesting — they must be capable of rational treatment. It is no part of the discipline of philosophy to assume that objects exist and can be known by mind. Its task rather is to inquire into the meaning of existence for mind. In a human life any "thing" is a thing for a "person." That is to say, rationality is not read into it, a foreign

being, but rationality is read out of it, a blood relation. The "person" is not only the excluding individuality, but is also the including principle. The reality of which it boasts itself it has a right to boast about; for to it the "thing" belongs. Wherever mind ranges it comes upon itself. The spiritual, so far from being a derivative, is that in the light of which alone a derivative can be an effective component of knowledge. It may be possible to speak as if reality occupied a kingdom denied to spirit, but the moment these words cease to represent a fiction, which is a convenient addition to the apparatus necessary for investigating, say, the behavior of forces, they lead to serious, if not fatal, error. Externality, as it is quaintly called, cannot but be for man one part of a rational order yielding itself to the persuasion of another, a more essentially real. Bearing this in mind, it has become possible to view the wildest flights of recent quasi-scientific "naturalism" and theological agnosticism with an equanimity which some, less percipient than their neighbors, have chosen to confound with dogmatism, or, more probably, with ignorance. The pity

expended on the poor "transcendentalist" is another excellent example of the topsy-turvydom of our vaunted modern thought. The transcendentalist, whose certainty is that man's experience is limited only by the rational, finds himself expected to eat the fragments from the table of the realist, who openly extols himself for dogmatizing about meats whose nature is unknowable. He who knows to know is a dreamer; he who knows only what he avers cannot be known, walks the solid earth. Slowly but surely, however, philosophy is teaching that the empirical remedy for ignorance may work more harm than the disease.

The term, religious reaction, which has been applied to the movement whereout such a result as, say, Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* has precipitated itself, is probably a misnomer. So far as the man in the wood is able to see the trees, the new tendency partakes scarcely at all of the character of reaction, nor can it claim to be religious in any special sense. Rather it is a first result of the steadily growing recognition that the spirituality of human nature has no more been destroyed by Darwin than by Lyall or

Copernicus. The mechanical conception of design that dominated the eighteenth century and the resultant ideal of God as a high class master-mason tend to disappear. They linger still in some few pulpits, and the sooner they are eschewed there the better for religion. Wider and less inadequate conceptions have supplanted them; and the so-called reaction is but an evidence of the growing tendency to recognize this more frankly, or at least with less pharisaical hesitancy. The truth is that latter-day science, theology, and philosophy have long been engaged upon a joint labor, and the larger confidence of many at present is a product of the equating of results.

The doctrine of evolution now wields the authority, not of a theory, but of a fact. Yet some of the deductions from it, which have been masquerading as facts for a few brief years, begin to shrink to their true proportions. God *quâ* Mind or Matter or Motion, that is, God according to a set of limited categories, has vanished into the inane of unknowability; freedom, viewed as a capacity for originating muscular movements, has taken its proper place among a crowd of superannuated dogmas; even to ask

the question, Does death end all? is to make dangerous concessions in the direction of foreclosing the reply. The introduction of the evolution conception, alike in metaphysics, in theology, and in science, has led to a revisal of former doctrines. God cannot now be regarded as an extra-mundane artificer who made the world, and then sent it off to spin through space for a season. But this is a very different doctrine from that involved in the categorical statement, There is no God. A new question, on the contrary, has been raised with respect to God's relationship to the world. So, in spite of all the forcible scepticism of the age, Mr. Balfour can make a declaration like the following with every prospect of commanding assent. "Compare, for example, the central truth of theology — 'there is a God' — with one of the fundamental presuppositions of science (itself a generalized statement of what is given in ordinary judgments of perception) — 'there is an independent natural world.' I am myself disposed to doubt whether so good a case can be made out for accepting the second of these propositions as can be made out for accepting the first."[1]

[1] *The Foundations of Belief*, pp. 236–237.

Even the lay mind is coming to observe that a world full of natural processes is not to be explained by the simple declaration that there are no such processes; and, moreover, that it is not sufficient to say, on the other side, that natural processes account for everything. They too are ever accompanied by conditions. Teleology may be in bad odor as a doctrine, it is more than likely to vindicate itself as a fact, if the evolution process is to yield up further secrets. The commonplace of philosophy, that there is a new issue and a way out of it, seems to be filtering into the general mind. Either God is unnecessary; or he is far more immediately necessary to this universe than any, save a small group of "vaporing mystics," had previously supposed. The former alternative may be dismissed as being irrelevant from the scientific, and impossible from the philosophic, standpoint; while no "plain man" would be likely to make the confession —

"And thrice I ha' patted my God on the head that men might call me brave."

The chief doctrines that go by the name of modern thought, then, can hardly be said to destroy the spiritual. In fact, they seem to

bless rather than to ban. Spiritual life appears to overflow the strictly natural, for the world of dead matter wanes, while the categories of organism and life and mind wax. "The materialists," as Schopenhauer said, "endeavor to show that all, even mental, phenomena are physical; and rightly; only they do not see that on the other hand, everything physical is at the same time metaphysical." But materialism can scarcely be said to represent an estimable force to-day, and the perception grows stronger and stronger, affecting an ever widening circle of thoughtful men, that "everything physical is at the same time metaphysical."

IV. *Speculative Gnosticism and the Theistic Problem.*

There is a frequently quoted catch phrase to the effect that in habit of mind all men are either Platonists or Aristotelians. With some, a spiritual passion for first principles, with others, a righteous conscientiousness in details, maintains ascendency. The founders and the ἐπίγονοι of systematic and of pious Gnosticism — Plato, some of the medieval

Realists, the Mystics, Spinoza, Schelling, Hartmann — might justifiably be selected to represent the former. But, after all, a sharp division of this kind abounds in misleading suggestions, for principles and details are scarcely thus separable. And undoubtedly, the thinker from whom a specialized Gnosticism received greatest impetus, under whose ægis it acquired, and still wields, widespread influence, was moved by a vehement regard for some details — perhaps not for all — only little less than by eagerness on behalf of principles. This combination, indeed, constituted the secret of Hegel's sway, and moulded the nature of his system. The interest of his theological thought centres, not simply in his grasp upon principles, but also in his illustrations of them typified by certain groups of phenomena that fall within the range of human experience. God ceases to be dismissed as unknowable, and ascetic seclusion is deemed powerless to heighten divinity one whit. Deity is the most real being; but complete satisfaction cannot be extracted from this abstract statement. So the conclusion follows that this reality reveals itself equally in thought and in things — in

man and in history, in life and in matter. Nor can the revelation be viewed negatively; it is pre-eminently positive, because, however limited in degree, no restriction is set upon kind. "To know what God as spirit is — to apprehend this accurately and distinctly in thoughts — requires careful and thorough speculation. It includes, in its forefront, the propositions: *God is God only so far as he knows himself; his self-knowledge is, further, his self-consciousness in man, and man's knowledge* OF *God, which proceeds to man's self-knowledge in God.* . . . When the immediacy and sensuousness of shape and knowledge is superseded, God is, in point of content, the essential and actual spirit of nature and spirit, while in point of form he is, first of all, presented to consciousness as a mental representation. This quasi-pictorial representation gives to the elements of his content, on one hand, a separate being, making them presuppositions towards each other, and phenomena which succeed each other. Their relationship it makes a series of events according to finite reflective categories. But, on the other hand, such a form of finite representationalism is also overcome

and superseded in the faith which realizes one spirit and in the devotion of worship."[1] On such a scheme there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous. But the important fact brought to light is, not that now and then the sublime descends to the level of the ridiculous, rather, on the contrary, that *always* the ridiculous cannot be bereft of elements of essential unity with the sublime.

"Partake thy confidence! No creature 's made so mean
But that, some way, it boasts, could we investigate,
Its supreme worth; fulfils, by ordinance of fate,
Its momentary task, gets glory all its own,
Tastes triumph in the world, pre-eminent, alone.
. . . . . .
As firm is my belief, quick sense preceives the same
Self-vindicating flash illustrate every man
And woman of our mass, and prove, throughout the plan,
No detail but, in place allotted it, was prime
And perfect."[2]

One need not travel far afield to detect the strength, impressiveness and animating inspiration of this doctrine. Although it must be said that critics of Hegel have too often been prone to dismiss these merits, and to fix only upon the formal weaknesses in-

[1] W. Wallace, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 176–177 (the italics are mine).

[2] Browning, *Fifine at the Fair*, Sec. xxix.

cident to the dialectic method. They have their reward in missing his truly formative influence, which, in spite of scholastic limitations and the arrogant intellectism of some disciples, exercises most potent authority to-day, even if "since the death of Professor Michelet, there is not a Hegelian left in Germany." When the Teutonic "national philosopher" appeared, certain one-sided tendencies had too long determined thought. His destiny was to remove these restraints, and in so doing, he emphasized other principles, principles with which it is impossible to dispense in approaching theistic problems. How far he overshot the mark, and became to some extent a reactionary himself, the sequel must show. As has been hinted already, the excellencies of his essentially constructive protest lie upon the surface.

Although many, including even some who are not actively hostile, fail to grasp its significance, Hegel's achievement forms a powerful factor in contemporary discussion. The chief cause of misunderstanding may be traced to the presence of two strands in his theory which theologians, and others, do not trouble to disentangle sufficiently. The one

lies in his conspectus of the ultimate nature of the universe; the other is to be detected in a schema of the method whereby the manifestations of this nature have taken place. In the latter the weaknesses of the Hegelian philosophy mainly repose, the former is the source of its strength. Here then, God becomes the synthetic principle immanent in the "single and unalterable system of relations" known to man as the world. Humanity is a revelation of deity on one rank, nature on another and lower. Accordingly, the universe may be viewed as an organism of which deity is the maintaining and originating agency. In the most literal sense, "he is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being." The inestimable value of the stress laid by Hegel on this doctrine rests upon its compacted rationalism. Once and forever, the trifling dogma-trimming of the eighteenth century — still, by the way, confounded with "speculative" rationalism — was dismissed. Naturalism, too, so far received acceptance, and was reproduced in an improved shape. The hypothesis did not stop short at vague intimations, but presented itself as a rounded

whole, wrought in many of its parts with great care, and welded throughout by the almost too rigorous application of a consistent method. God is not simply *over* all his works, but *in* them, and in them with deepest actuality. To conserve religion, to lay hold upon deity, man is no longer required to condemn his own experience. Shorn of this he would be poor indeed. Here, on the contrary, he is schooled to perceive that, within the circle of his own self-conscious life, and only there, can he ever hope to catch a glimpse of the Absolute Spirit. The worth of this protest against a thought-damning Agnosticism, against a despiritualizing Materialism, can scarcely be overestimated. And, despite numerous vicissitudes, it has vindicated itself for the last three quarters of the century by its regenerating results. Nay, such has been its persuasive efficacy that too many, taking the complete system as if it were a kind of sacred fetich, have met criticism with ill-concealed temper, and have even persuaded themselves that friendly hints about possible faults and dangers ought not to be brooked.

Yet, even after elimination of the dialectic

method, the solution of the problem here propounded has its own imperfections, and drags peculiar perils in its train. The doctrine of deity faces two ways, because it embodies at once a theory of the divine and of the human. Consequently, the cardinal difficulty has always been the preservation of a nicely adjusted balance between these aspects. And it is hardly a slight when one points out that the task, as it well might, has proved too severe. Having discovered the Idea, the Absolute, God in everything, but most eminently in man, the temptation to proceed as if the known universe, and human self-consciousness in particular, furnished a comparatively exhaustive presentation of the divine nature, became too powerful for resistance. The warring of the pantheistic and monotheistic tendencies, both implicitly present in Hegel, ended, unfortunately, in a comparatively complete victory for the former. From this conclusion Hegel's long travail with Greek thought and culture did nothing to deliver him, and his criticism upon Kant served but to strengthen the "set" of these early currents. A double danger lurks here. In the first place, if God be identified with

the world in which his self-conscious revelation proceeds, then, not only is he degraded to a level where the spiritual characteristics, predominant in man, fail of universality, but the means whereby the interpretation of the divine self-disclosure may be read lose significance. What could we make of a sentence in which every word was a preposition or a noun or a verb; or if every word were the same word? Would it be a sentence any longer? Similarly, level up everything to God, and you run real danger of dissolving him, or, at least, of confounding him with some vague unity which is so crass that it cannot prove a well-spring in the experience of a spiritual being. Combine God too closely with the universe, and you are apt so to infuse divinity into each part that no one conveys any special information. Unity ejects content when identity comes in. And a God who is anything may, on closer inspection, turn out to be a suspiciously easy anagram for nothing.

In the second place, this mastering inclination to solve the theistic problem by quietly ceasing to be theistic, detracts largely from

the really permanent import of Hegel's teaching. With the utmost decision, he warned man not to look for God in some far-off sphere, closed to intuition and impregnable to imagination. With equal decision, he insisted that discovery of the divine, if discovery be possible, could not take place except in human experience. The record of the race, man's self-consciousness, and man's knowledge of nature denote the sufficiently broad sphere in which the search must be organized. No more salutary advice could be tendered. Nevertheless, in following it, one must bear in remembrance that it relates no more than indirectly to "very God of very God." The direct reference touches man's equipment for clearly thinking out the problems that surround the divine being. And, whenever God himself is supposed to be completely envisaged in the process of the Idea's — an abstraction from human experience — self-diremption and final enriched self-identity, these very problems meet with implicit denial. No room is left for their occurrence. The implications are that God and the universe coincide, for the reason that only in the universe can man find deity.

This, further, implies the depletion of God's nature by the very simple process of showing the relativity — and, therefore, non-divinity — of every separate thing that contributes to the general whole. In the end, nothing remains to which your deity can impart absoluteness; consequently he is nothing. Hegel, in short, was not so good as his profession. He says somewhere that Lalande was right when he swept the heavens with his glass, and declared he could find no god. Nature may confirm a theory of God, it hardly suffices to originate one; the prime elements of adequacy would be wanting. Yet this same Hegel, who is so bethumped for treading the "high *a priori* road," himself sought in nature a too exhaustive presentation of deity. Against his own philosophical creed, he countenanced a procedure of which the only logical conclusion would be the disappearance of reality in blank, indistinguishable sameness, — a sameness that would immediately be entitled to the honors, now somewhat barren, of deification. In his anxiety to strike home with the great truth that possessed him, he tended to forget, and led many others to forget completely, that

"to deify man is as illegitimate as to naturalize him."[1]

V. *Personality and the Theistic Problem*

It would be euphemistic to call the Hegelian position easy of apprehension. Abounding as it does in closely related truths, strictly circumscribed statements of it are apt to seem paradoxical or to be partial. Nor are these difficulties lessened by Hegel's own conclusions or by the varied repetitions of them emanating from his followers. Nevertheless, while recalling this, and making due allowance for it, no impartial observer can fail to detect the central truth. Whatever its resultant perils, the permanently valid principle enunciated by Hegel finds expression in the doctrine that condemnation of experience must proceed from within experience. Such is man's relation to knowledge, that here he cannot but save or damn himself; he has no other resource. Only from the conceived can judgments originate on reality, on truth, on validity, and on their opposites. In one sense, accordingly, exper-

[1] J. Seth, *A Study of Ethical Principles*, p. 440.

ience becomes absolute. The danger lies in the eventual identification of it with the Absolute. To this inference the propositions often adopted by Hegel lend themselves only too readily. "God is God only in so far as he knows himself. His self-knowledge is, further, his self-consciousness in man, and man's knowledge *of* God, which proceeds to man's self-knowledge in God." This is a specimen of those overstatements that unavoidably lead to the perilous verge of pantheism. Yet, the reference to man's "knowledge *of* God" suggests another line of thought. When confined to experience, humanity has only a relative power of laying hold upon deity. But experience furnishes the starting-point, the material, and the *goal* of man's theological effort. Hence, indeed, the theistic *problem*. For, how can God remain God, and still be for man a construction derived from experience? In other words, is it possible, on this basis, to preserve the requisite balance between immanence and transcendence? Hegel's view of the importance of experience must be accepted, if we are not to abandon or obscure the problem. Working from this, then, does any

line become perceptible along which the direction of the solution lies?

Broadly speaking, upon reflective analysis human experience betrays the presence of three constitutive elements. These are — the self, the not-self, which are sufficiently definite; and the relation between the two, which is sufficiently indefinite. True to a certain tendency in the Hegelian system, though not necessarily to its ultimate genius, an absolute idealism might well locate deity in the last. Subtle and fertile as this suggestion undoubtedly is, the objection already noted above clings to it very closely. The inevitable consequence appears in a persistent failure to rate personality at its proper worth. The individual, entangled in a universal process, takes on many characteristics of a type, maybe, but the "single life" wanes. Consequently, when the problem of deity forces itself upon attention, a similar omission needs to be marked. God is something, something very essential, but the right to speak of him as personal possesses only the slightest warrant. Despite faith in experience, the subject holding it — who is, after all, the heart of the matter — receives scant recognition.

Personality, then, requires to be reimported, as it were. For only here, in an ideal region which, at the same time, partakes most fundamentally of reality, can the data requisite for the resolution of the problem of divinity be acquired. Hegel's epoch-making insistence upon the irrefragableness of experience implies explanation of life by reference to the highest rather than to the lowest factors that it presents. Now, within the broad range of intelligency, personality may be regarded, not simply as the highest, but, in one aspect, as the only factor. Here, in any case, we light upon a principle which conditions experience and includes within its operative grasp intellect, will, feeling. They are its subordinates, not because they are forced to toil at its tasks, but because, in thus functioning, they come to be themselves. The point at which personality touches the theistic problem stands closely connected with this. Knowledge, volition, affection, are moments in a process that reveals two selves — the self as it is, and the self as, in many varied ways, it deems that it ought to be. Personality manifests itself in the recognition of this unbridged

interval between the actual and the ideal. This separation and its healing scarcely permit of severance from any detail of experience, and certainly they cannot be disassociated from the organism of experience as a whole. The importance of this for the present discussion centres in the fact that it supplies, ready to hand, a solution of the antinomy between immanence and transcendence. Not an element enters into experience but submits to the all-transforming power of the self, in the sense that everything is sent to its place in an order to which it had not previously belonged in the same way. From another side, personality must be viewed as all-transcendent. Were it not more than itself, the processes wherein its immanence is realized would never be initiated. Personality as such, therefore, may be made subject of hopeful appeal.

It may, of course, be approached from several different sides, or, to be more accurate, the name may be given to some function, or group of functions, with which we are concerned only indirectly now. Walking in a lonely glen, I may suddenly pull up with the exclamation, "There is a man!"

Personality in this semi-void form has plainly no assistance to offer. Rising a little higher in the scale, personality might be taken to imply that vague feeling of quietude almost of lassitude, that one experiences while drinking in the glory of a summer's day. Such a state rises beyond the purely animal level, because the subject of it recognizes it as his. But the sentient element maintains an immense predominance. In this interpretation of the term, as in the last, we cannot discover the desiderated aid. Finally, to adduce but one other example, personality may be regarded from the typically psychological standpoint. This implies that the *ego* is stopped, so to speak, at a particular juncture — it may be any one — in its self-conscious life, and that the conditions assembled at the moment are analyzed. Most valuable information can thus be gleaned, but the tendency is to level down. Reason and ideality might thus be reduced, and have been, to the grade of feeling, just because the opportunity snatched by the psychologist necessarily omits aspects of the synthetic and transforming power of the self. And even if, as in Mr. Illingworth's Bampton Lectures

on *Personality, Human and Divine*, a description of personality be undertaken with direct reference to the problem now under discussion, the psychological and psychological-descriptive interpretations prove to be insufficiently ultimate. The former takes the self to pieces for the sake of so doing, the other calls attention to the parts in action. Neither specifically addresses itself to the essence of personality, on which in approaching the theistic problem we cannot choose but lean.

Personality, accordingly, is to be understood here in its ontological or operative sense. Extend the term reason — adopting it because it is man's *differentia* — so as to subsume equally intellect, will, and feeling, and personality might be defined as the principle of the unity of the reasonable for a reasonable being. This principle, as it operates in the constitution and moulding of human experience, combines the immanent with the transcendent. The person is immanent in every corner of his experiential possessions, giving them the worth they have, relating them to one another, and overlooking their interconnection with the conscious or half-

conscious aim of rendering them more effective instruments in the service of the whole. But personality proves to be transcendent as well as transcendental or constitutive. Progress, development, expectation, mark its daily path. Strenuous it may be in welding the countless parts of experience, it is still more strenuous in bidding man reach forth to higher and yet higher ends. Conscience, dissatisfaction, distrust, are but other names for that condemnation which personality pronounces upon itself, upon things, upon others. Its transcendence conditions all these judgments. From out a better, a more perfect, a less evil sphere it fetches a standard which it applies to itself with as much rigor as to dead matter. This power of projection, whereby personality includes within its grasp all past and all possible experience, realizes its most essential nature when it lays down the liberal outlines of that more real world towards which it ever moves. Here it touches the theistic problem, not merely because it provides an analogy upon which God may be worthily viewed, but because it supplies man with the sole criterion whereby he can frame a judgment regarding the

Infinite. This is the reason for which it is abundantly true that "no positive hypothesis can be offered as a substitute for a personal God, which is not either an abstraction from personality, and therefore demonstrably unreal, or an abstraction inconsistently personified, and therefore demonstrably untrue." [1]

The term infinite is not to be regarded as a bare negation of the finite. If this were its import, it had far better be summarily dismissed. The transcendence of personality, which leads directly to the infinite, has itself positive content, and on this reliance must now be placed.

For the theist, the infinite is not simply that which remains when finite characteristics have been cancelled. There is a positive difference, a difference, furthermore, in kind as well as in degree. To the eye of reason the latter may be visible; the former appeals to the eye of rational faith. If, then, we are to conceive of God, we must look upon him as a personal being. By an effort of reason it is possible to arrive at the conclusion that he combines the qualities of immanence and

[1] J. R. Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 209.

transcendence just like man. Further, one may rest satisfied with an interpretation of his immanence in the universe, as Hegel apparently did. Yet this does not necessarily prescribe a rule for all; nor, indeed, will it even seem sufficient to every mind. For the question immediately arises, Are immanence and transcendence related in the divine nature precisely as they are in human experience? And behind this lies the second debatable point, Would not an affirmative answer imply a fatal concession to Gnosticism? God's transcendence over us, if he be God in fulness, may best be sought in the conclusions which we are able to draw, from an inspection of our own spiritual being, regarding the highest conceivable person. And, proceeding thus, it may be affirmed that God cannot but be viewed as all-immanent in his own nature. This marks his transcendence above man. He cannot be God and transcend himself. For him there can be no better world out of which he brings motives productive of aspiration. Yet the universal process, as man knows it, leads us to *believe* that, despite his self-immanence, God is not an *actus purus*.

> "Brute and bird, reptile and the fly,
> Ay and, I nothing doubt, even tree, shrub, plant
> And flower o' the field, are all in a common pact
> To worthily defend the trust of trusts,
> Life from the Ever Living."

Were God simply *in*finite he might be, for aught we know, an *actus purus*. But, though he manifest himself, we are bound to believe that, with him, the transcendence of personality over itself is non-existent. As God, he must see the end in the beginning of the universal plan. So, he is all-immanent in self; so, too, he is over all his works, and over man. His transcendence above us is a transcendental transcendence — a transcendence informing an experience, not merely an impotent existence in an unknowable and unknown region. And, so far as the eye of faith can perceive, it centres in that bridged distance between "grasp and reach" which man, because he is man, cannot overpass.

We call God the infinite, and worship him as a person, not because the qualities of this present evil world have simply slipped from off him, far rather, because we have discerned in our own lives something of infinity. Our own transcendence ever remains an impelling power extending the dominion in which

immanence holds sway. Hence, we are led to a rationally grounded belief that the perfect personality must be one in whose nature this separation between the two sides of personality has, not only been overcome, but has never existed. The creative power of human personality, evidenced most eminently by Jesus, must be, in the conception of deity, at once capable of full expression and sure of all that this energizing can accomplish. There is no need to commit the error of proceeding from the finite to that empty notion, the non-finite. The passage is from a principle perceptible in process to the same principle now believed to be eternally realized *in toto* — from germ to completest actuality. The beginning of our contention lies wholly within the bounds of speculative thought; the conclusion to which it tends must always remain largely a matter of faith. The only God whom man is able to know cannot but put on — shall we say for man — the "limits" of personality. But, then, personality, as we have tried to see, does not fall under the category of limitation in any of its customary uses. So we proceed to an interpretation of the divine nature, which indeed preserves

the characteristics of personality, but which at the same time mirrors them as recombined in such fundamentally different — yet, in the circumstances, imperative — relations that an all-embracing being shows in dim outline, to whom, because we conceive something of what he is, we aspire in lowly reverence.

In one aspect, the anthropomorphic view of deity may be legitimately pushed to the extreme. He in whom we live and move and have our being must be very near to each one of us. If we take experience as our guide, God approaches closer and closer in the relationship that subsists between the self and the better self, which is the seed of all our doing.

> "God is,
> Man partly is and wholly hopes to be."

On the other hand, it is easy to be too anthropomorphic by stopping short here, and so bringing God down to the level of an abstract quality common to men. To pass beyond this implies, indeed, the necessity for raising the theistic problem. Personality points the way and, to this extent, may assist toward a solution. But, by its very nature, it also directs us to look for a new spiritual

life wherein all that a person can ever conceive of the perfection at which he feels impelled to aim is, not only present, but has ever been ineffably surpassed in the divine certainty of self and of the origin, import, and end of creation. In relation to this faith, as so often happens, the half-truth of the poet witnesses to deeper insight than the rigorous demonstration of the philosopher.

"O Thou, — as represented here to me
In such conception as my soul allows, —
Under Thy measureless, my atom width!
Man's mind, what is it but a convex glass
Wherein are gathered all the scattered points
Picked out of the immensity of sky,
To reunite there, be our heaven for earth,
Our known unknown, our God revealed to man?"

CONCLUSION

The Final Idealism

IDEALISM has generated its fanaticisms, and their debts to unreason have constituted a call upon the essential merits of the entire theory. We need not exclaim "Lord, Lord," to Hegel, yet we cannot but acknowledge the reasons for his sway. The absolutism, out of which so many fashion a convenient bogy, has after all little to do with man's making himself in God's image. Rather, it relates to certain contributions to the conditions of philosophic and theological progress, in the absence of which a theory of things would be incoherent or impossible. Experience must be its own judge. This, in a word, is Hegel's epoch-making discovery. But it requires to be extricated from the tangle of formal apparatus wherewith it was originally presented. As we have tried to observe, two elements co-exist in the bibles

of idealism. The one furnishes a summary statement of the nature of the universe as it cannot but be for man, the other details a method whereby the principle, alleged to be immanent in this nature, has characteristically manifested itself from generation to generation. Agnostic critics, and even Mr. A. J. Balfour, tend to identify these two. Or, at all events, their reasoning so operates that the condemnation which they justly pour out upon the latter, overflows the former. And the contention to be urged is, that while the latter constitutes the Achilles' heel of much contemporary idealism, the former furnishes all idealists with an inexhaustible source of speculative strength. Rationalism, not in the peddling eighteenth century sense, but in the guise of a socialized reason, wherein all men are partakers, and whereby alone they can execute valid judgment upon the deep things of life, constitutes the ægis of a satisfactory theology. Only within the charmed, yet supremely natural, circle of self-consciousness can men hope ever to obtain a glimpse of the infinities to which in common they yearn. This is a theory whose line cannot be turned by any

experience-destroying agnosticism, for the simple reason that it has no flank. So far as a human being, at least, can judge, nothing irrational, unrational, non-rational — the name matters little, so long as it is understood to imply what indeed can only be *said*, for it is non-sense, that what lies out of self-consciousness is as good as nothing for it — is able to occupy an organic place in experience. Only from what has been envisaged by self-consciousness in others or in me, can judgments, theologically speaking, emanate with regard to reality, truth, validity, and the like. Experience, as conditioned by self-consciousness, cannot but be absolute in this respect. Whether the Absolute and this experience are one is a totally different matter. Even Mr. Balfour, in his anxiety to repudiate the latter inference, has unfortunately forgotten the former fact. The limits of personality, it may very well be, cannot circumscribe God. But man must fit his infinity to the finite. That is to say, within *his own* self-consciousness if he is to be a man in any full sense, he cannot but include the self-consciousness of his neighbors. A purely personal experience is as inconceivable, and

as inept, as the Unknowable. Yet this is not to say that a man ever can get beyond the realm of ideas. Idealist he is by nature, and idealist he, therefore, must remain. And it is possible for him to be so far satisfied with this state of nature, because he shares it along with all his fellows. What they accomplish can be transferred to him, what he achieves he gains with them. In short, so far from idealism leading to solipsism, its main presupposition turns out to be that solipsism is a word representing a theory — which cannot by any rational possibility be thought. And one hardly sees sufficient reason for giving up the priceless treasure of idealism, the rehabilitation of experience, because some idealists seek to show that deity is no more than the process of ideas.

No doubt both extremes are traceable to the same causes. Idealism of the contemporary sort has scarcely reached its centenary yet. The swaddling clothes of system with which it was first presented to a half-delighted, half-astounded world, still tend to obscure its outlines, and perhaps to warp its growth. But the central life itself grows stronger meantime. When it has come to be

more fully understood, fewer will be afraid of it, fewer too will be so eager to descant on its seeming accompaniments. Meanwhile, it is enough to recognize that the self-consciousness of men, the experience of the race as a co-operation of these self-conscious beings, and the knowledge which, with a modesty that veils truth too much, this experience alleges itself to have of "other things" are conditions of the approval or disapproval of every possible conception. To-day we present these truths to ourselves mainly under biological categories. We say, for example, that "Society is an organism." Yet, do we not know full well that this is untrue? Society never was, is not, and cannot be an organism. So too we tend to regard experience in the same way, and no small portion of the errors into which we stumble, all unwittingly, flows from this tendency. For an organism has an inside and an outside. The central doctrine of idealism, the citadel of the possibility of philosophizing, of building up a theological system, lies precisely in an explicit denial of this. Nevertheless, one is not compelled to suppose that a tower has been founded on

or fashioned out of omniscience. Rather, looking the reality in the face, one exclaims with the poet: —

"How inexhaustibly the spirit grows!
One object, she seemed erewhile born to reach
With her whole energies and die content, —
So like a wall at the world's edge it stood,
With naught beyond to live for, — is that reached? —
Already are new undream'd energies
Outgrowing under and extending farther
To a new object; — there 's another world!"

Human experience, unlike any organism, can be traced to nothing but itself, can be projected into nothing but itself. And the great law which thus decrees is perhaps best expressed as the law of sociality. For in thought as in action, seeing they are but different sides of one being, the ultimate principle must be conception of the true, and effort to realize it in a life which, at every turn, implies contact, companionship and their opposites.

If, then, experience be a closed circle with sides ever receding as man approaches; if it be, that is, a circle containing ideas, bounded, if *bounded* it be, by ideals, then what of the opposition between Authority and Reason so much vaunted by theologians?

One may agree first, that "always and everywhere an Imaginary Observer, contemplating from some external coign of vantage the course of human history, would note the immense, the inevitable, and on the whole the beneficent, part which Authority plays in the production of belief."[1] But, it must be pointed out, further, that the limitation of the Observer's view is not surprising. Being outside experience, in fact, the wonder is that he perceives so much. But his creator, being himself within experience, cannot so limit his own vision. "To Reason is largely due the growth of new and the sifting of old knowledge; the ordering, and in part the discovery, of that vast body of systematized conclusions which constitute so large a portion of scientific, philosophical, ethical, political, and theological learning. . . . When we turn, however, from the conscious work of Reason to that which is unconsciously performed for us by Authority, a very different spectacle arrests our attention. The effects of the first, prominent as they are through the dignity of their origin, are trifling as compared with the all-pervading

[1] A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, p. 200.

influences which flow from the second."[1] There is an "antinomy between the equities of Reason and the expediencies of Authority,"[2] yet "it is from Authority that Reason itself draws its most important premises."[3] To all of which it is possible, if not necessary, to say Yea and Amen; but only on the condition implied in the last statement. If experience be of the nature for which we have contended, then Reason may draw its premises from Authority. Yet, it is able to do so only because Authority is its very self under another name. To what indeed do we attach the term, except to "that vast body of systematized conclusions which constitute so large a portion of scientific, philosophical, ethical, political, and theological learning?" What, for instance, are the Laws of Motion, but rational conclusions which the physicists take, on authority, as the basis of further investigation? Why does Mr. Balfour hold, with Kant, "that without matter categories are empty," unless he accepts a rational authority? What is

[1] A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, pp. 226, 227, 228.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 215.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 228.

the institution of marriage but a rational recognition of the necessity of the family for the safety of the commonwealth authoritatively enacted? What is the "ostentatious futility of the rights of man," but a rational condemnation of a brief authority rationally originated? What are creeds but rational pronouncements, by those reasonably, or unreasonably, assumed to be experts, authoritatively put forward in place of thoughts on behalf of the multitude assumed unable to think on difficult problems? In other words, the antinomy between Reason and Authority is possible only on the ground of an implicit identity. And it is the business of the theologian, not so much to emphasize the difference as to show wherein the oneness consists. To insist that belief is wise or necessary or expedient, because authority plays so large a part in human history is, in the circumstances which we have tried to set forth, very much like saying that a Quaker loves the ocean for its broad brim. No doubt he does; but, with equal certainty, he does not. And so, the last state of the theologian, thus hemmed in, is worse than the first. His conclusion would really be an

apostrophe to the unchangeable: — Would I were not a man — or a Quaker!

But the semi-agnostic is better than his bare word. The arguments which he employs, with the aid of the Imaginary Observer, carry him beyond a merely transcendent idealism. "The Incarnation throws the whole scheme of things, as we are too easily apt to represent it to ourselves, into a different and far truer proportion. It absolutely changes the whole scale on which we might be disposed to measure the magnitudes of the universe."[1] Most certainly: but why? Because man inhabits a city whose builder and maker is God. In this stupendous fact — the most authoritative of all facts — his reason, especially on its ethical side, finds one relatively complete manifestation of humanness. The persistence of rationality is, even here, the ultimate cause of the operative power of the Incarnator. We bow our heads before the Cross, it is often said, in presence of a fathomless mystery. But the mystery centres chiefly in man's surprise that his own most essential qualities, which seem so temporal, should in

[1] *Foundations of Belief*, pp. 346, 347.

truest verity be eternal. His holiest and highest ideals *are* here. So his beliefs cease to be mere otiose acquiescences. "For," as Mr. Balfour says, in a passage which admits all that we have been urging, "they minister, or rather the Reality behind them ministers, to one of our deepest ethical needs; to a need which, far from showing signs of diminution, seems to grow with the growth of civilization, and to touch us ever more keenly as the hardness of an earlier time dissolves away."[1]

[1] *Foundations of Belief*, p. 354.

INDEX

Absolute Idealism, 116 sq.
Agnosticism, 112, 129, 146, 157, 168.
——, Ritschlian, 118 sq., 154.
——and the Theistic Problem, 135 sq.
American Theology, 6 sq.
Anselm, 95.
Aquinas, Thomas, 95.
Arnold, Matthew, 7.
Aufklärung, 135.
Authority and Reason, 192 sq.

Balfour, A. J., 155, 158, 160, 188 sq., 193 n., 194 n., 196 n., 197 n.
Bampton Lectures, 178.
Bender, 6.
Beyschlag, 5, 66 n.
Biedermann, 5, 7, 76.
Bradley, F. H., 51, 52 n.
Briggs, C. A., 7.
British Theology, 6 sq.
Browning, R., 134, 165 n.
Bruce, A. B., 7.
Buddhism, 31, 62, 74–75.

Cæsar, 65.
Caird, E., 17 n., 29 n., 30 n., 34 n., 54 n., 64 n.
Campbell, Macleod, 8.
Carlyle, 29.
Christ, 15 sq., 23, 32, 34, 37 sq., 43, 57, 63 sq., 97 sq., 105 sq., 107 sq., 114 sq., 123, 127.
——, Person of, 66 sq., 75–80.
Christianity, 2, 14, 21, 26, 32, 34, 41, 56, 60 sq., 77 sq., 95.
Copernicus, 159.
Critical Idealism, 93, 137, 145–146.
Cromwell, 65.

Dante, 34.
Darwin, 158.
Daub, 3.
Deism, 40.
Development and Evolution, 57 sq.
Dialectic Method, 16, 30 sq., 45 sq., 53 sq.
Dorner, 5.

Ely Lectures, 2.
Epistles, The, 24 sq., 35 sq., 73.
Eternal Consciousness, The, 136.

Ethical Culture, 46.
Everett, C. C., 7.
Evolution, 159 sq.
—— and Development, 57 sq.

Fairbairn, A. M., 7.
Faith and Historical Criticism, 106 sq.
Fichte, 3.
Fisher, G. P., 7.
Flint, R., 7.

Gautama, 34, 74–75.
German Theology, 2 sq.
Gifford Lectures, 2, 20 n., 21n., 28 n., 41, 42 n., 72n.
Gladstone, W. E., 7.
Gnosticism, 129, 182.
——, Speculative, and the Theistic Problem, 162 sq.
God, Personality of, 47 sq., 100 sq., 121, 174 sq., 183 sq.
——, Kingdom of, 109 sq., 113 sq.
Goethe, 65, 129.
Göschel, 3.
Gospel, The fourth, 36.
Gospels, The, 24 sq., 35 sq., 103 sq.
Greece, 31, 95, 169.
Green, T. H., 7, 28 n.

Harnack, 109 n., 111.
Hartmann, E. von, 69, 163.
Hegel, 3, 4, 11 sq., 34, 39, 48, 83, 117, 136, 163 sq., 173 sq., 182, 187.
Hegel, Disciples of, 17 sq.
Herrmann, W., 6, 67 n., 88, 94, 97, 100 n., 104, 105 n., 107 n.
Hibbert Lectures, 2.
Historical Criticism & Faith, 106 sq.
Holtzmann, 25.
Hudibras, 120.
Hume, 147, 155, 156.

Idealism, Absolute, 116 sq.
——, Critical, 93, 145–146.
——, The Final, 187 sq.
Illingworth, J. R. 178, 181 n.
Incarnation, The, 127, 196–197.

James, St., 43.
Jesus (see Christ).
John, St., 43.
Jones, H., 151 n.
Judaism, 31, 56, 62, 103, 112.
Judgment of Value, 91, 93, 102, 107, 117 sq., 122, 146.

Kaftan, 88, 94.
Kant, 2, 6, 12, 84, 85–87, 88, 93, 94, 96, 100, 101, 146, 147, 155, 156, 169, 194.
Kattenbusch, 97 n.
Keim, 5.
Kingdom of God, 109 sq., 113 sq.

Lange, F. A., 87.
Lobstein, P., 82 n.

Locke, 144.
London, 2.
Lotze, 6, 87, 88, 89 sq.
Luther, 34.
Lyall, 158.

Mackintosh, R., 8, 115 n., 124 n.
——, W., 7, 9 n., 35 n., 38 n.
Marheineke, 3, 4.
Materialism, 168.
Menzies, A., 7.
Metaphysic and Theology, 86 sq., 92 sq.
Michael-Angelo, 65.
Michelet, K. L., 166.
Mozart, 65.

Naturalism, 157, 168.
Neo-Hegelians, 17 sq.

Oetinger, 4.
Oldenberg, H., 75 n.
Orr, James, 7.
Oxford, 2.

Paul, St., 38, 43, 60, 69 sq.
Paulus, 0.
Pentecost, 38.
Personality, 50 sq., 177 sq.
—— of God, 47 sq., 100 sq., 121, 174 sq., 183 sq.
—— & the Theistic Problem, 173 sq.
Pfleiderer, O., 5, 6, 7, 20 n., 21, 27, 28 n., 42 n., 44 n., 70, 72 n.
Philo, 25.
Philosophy and Theology, 13 sq., 48 sq., 125 sq.
Plato, 88, 162.
Principle of Rationality, 146 sq.

Raphael, 65.
Rationalism, 40, 188 sq.
Rationality, Principle of, 146 sq.
Realism, Transfigured, 137, 138 sq.
Reason and Authority, 192 sq.
Reformation, 32, 95.
Religion and Philosophy, 48 sq.
Renouvier, 7.
Ritschl, A., 6, 77 n., 83, 86, 87, 88 sq., 96, 100, 102 n., 109 n., 116, 117, 124.
Ritschlian Agnosticism, 118 sq., 154.
—— Theology, 82 sq., 95 sq.
———, Criticism of, 112 sq.
———, Strength of, 112–115.
Robinson, A., 38 n.
Romanes, G. J., 155 n.
Rothe, R., 4.
Royce, J., 7.

Saussaye, P. D. C. de la, 12 n.
Schelling, 3, 4, 84, 163.
Schleiermacher, 2, 4, 6, 12.
Schopenhauer, 161.
Schultz, H., 103 n.
Science, 149 sq.
Scottish Universities, 2.

Seth, J., 173 n.
Shakespeare, 34, 65.
Sin, 111, 125 sq.
Society, 191.
Socrates, 34.
Solipsism, 190.
Speculative Theology, 11 sq., 19 sq., 27 sq., 96.
—— ——, Criticism of, 39 sq.
—— Gnosticism & the Theistic Problem, 162 sq.
Spencer, H., 139 sq., 154, 155.
Spinoza, 100, 163.
Sterrett, J. M., 7.
Stewart, A., 7.
Stoicism, 31, 62.
Strauss, 4, 39.
Substance, 144.

Teleology, 159, 161.
Tennyson, 43 n.
Theistic Problem, 125 sq.
—— —— and Agnosticism, 135 sq.
—— —— and Personality, 173 sq.
—— —— and Speculative Gnosticism, 162 sq.
Theological Situation, The, 1 sq.
Theology, American, 6 sq.
——, British, 6 sq.
Theology, German, 2 sq.
—— and Metaphysic, 86 sq., 92 sq., 117 sq.
—— and Philosophy, 13 sq., 125 sq.
——, Ritschlian, 82 sq., 95 sq.
—— ——, Criticism of, 112 sq.
—— ——, Strength of, 112-115.
——, Speculative, 11 sq., 19 sq., 96.
Thikötter, 113 n.
Transfigured Realism, 137, 138 sq.
Tübingen Theory, 23 sq., 76.

Ulrici, 50.
Unknowable, The, 136, 139, 142 sq.

Vatke, 4.
Vedic Religion, 31.
Vorbrodt, G., 120 n.

Wallace, W., 41, 42 n., 165 n.
Weiss, Bernhard, 5, 6.
Weisse, C. H., 3.
Weizsäcker, 5, 126 n.
Wendt, H. H., 25, 109 n.
Wenley, R. M., 61 n.

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